

The culinary star of *Big Night* is a pasta dish with penne, tomato sauce, meatballs, sausage and eggs.

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Guangdong is so well known for its bullish economy that many forget it also has much to offer as a tourist destination – not least its many magnificent gardens, old and new.

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The complex *dage* chorus of the Dong ethnic group caused a sensation when it was “discovered” last century.

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Storm in a Dragon Boat

By Su Wei

Reports that South Korea had applied to UNESCO to have its Dano Day festival recognized as an “intangible cultural heritage” have ignited something of a media storm in China.

Dano Day, which falls on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month is the Korean equivalent of China's Duanwu Jie, also known as the Dragon Boat Festival.

People's Daily reported on May 6 that “a professor in northeast China has presented a letter to the Ministry of Culture claiming that an Asian country is to apply to have the festival listed as a world oral and intangible heritage.”

According to the report, vice minister of culture Zhou Heping commented at a recent national meeting of the Preservation Program of the National and Folk Culture of China, “If the application is approved, China will be thrown into a state of embarrassment.”

The report was quickly picked up and reprinted in other Chinese newspapers and websites.

Two days later, a report in Liaoning's *Huashang Morning Post* said the professor referred to in the report was from a university in Liaoning Province and gave him the pseudonym “Bing An.” According to the report, in early April, Bing received an invitation from an Asian country to a seminar on its culture. “The invitation says that the country will apply to have its Duanwu Jie listed as a world oral and intangible heritage. Sensing the seriousness of such an application, Bing reported the matter to the Ministry of Culture.”

Over the past week, there has been a stream of headlines such as “Duanwu Jie May Become Another Country's Heritage” and “Take Action to Protect Duanwu Jie” in Chinese newspapers and websites.

Sui Guoqing, vice mayor of Yueyang, Hunan Province (where the festival is traditionally said to have originated) told local media on May 9, “It is our obligation to protect a festival which belongs to the Chinese nation. Faced with such an urgent situation, we have made it a priority to lodge our own application for the festival to be listed as a world cultural heritage. Faced with the South Korean application, we have no option, we have to succeed in our application!”



Dragon boat races are held all over China, and in Chinese communities all around the world to mark Duanwu Jie.

Photo by Photocom

Origins of Duanwu Jie

Duanwu Jie, or Dragon Boat Festival, commemorates the life and death of patriot-poet Qu Yuan. It is traditionally held on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month.

Qu Yuan served in the court of Emperor Huai of the state of Chu during the Warring States Period (475-221 BC). Exiled from his home after advocating political reforms, Qu committed suicide

by jumping into the Miluo River upon hearing that the state of Qin had captured the Chu capital.

Local people rushed to the riverbank, and splashed the water and threw zongzi (steamed glutinous rice wrapped in a bamboo leaf) to prevent the fish from eating Qu's body and as a sacrifice to his spirit.

Today, people eat zongzi and

hold dragon boat races (dragons were believed in ancient times to be the guardians of rivers) as a way of continuing the tradition.

Dragon Boats are generally brightly painted and decorated canoes, their heads shaped like open-mouthed dragons. Depending on the length, up to 80 rowers can power a boat. Before a dragon boat enters competition, it must be “brought to life” by painting the eyes in a special ceremony.



Zongzi

However on Tuesday, Beijing newspaper *Star Daily* revealed the real identity of Bing An to be a retired professor of Liaoning University named Wu Bingan. On the same day, China News Agency reported Wu had clarified that the earlier media reports were not accurate. “The invitation letter did not mention the application at all.”

China News Agency also quoted an unnamed official from the Ministry of Culture as saying that the earlier media reports had not been entirely fair. When *Beijing Today* contacted the ministry on Tuesday, a staff member of the information department

declined to comment.

Meanwhile a spokesman for the South Korean Embassy told *Beijing Today* Wednesday that an application for world heritage listing for the festival in Gangneung would be lodged next year.

Duanwu Jie, Dano Day

According to *Korea Now*, a bi-weekly magazine published by the *Korea Herald* Dano Day is one of the “Big Three” festivals, along with Chuseok (the Korean Thanksgiving Day) and Gujeong (Lunar New Year), and all three have close to or over one thousand years of history.

“Dano's origins are wrapped in chivalry. A vassal named Gulwon in ancient China committed suicide by throwing himself into a lake on the date that would eventually become Dano in a show of fidelity and integrity after learning that his fellow vassals had betrayed him. Death rites were performed in his honor thereafter to soothe his soul, and this tradition was eventually passed down to Korea. Dano took on a romantic slant during the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910), as it allowed a rare opportunity for women to venture outside and join in the festivities.”

The magazine says that ancient people celebrated Dano Day as a break before the hot, sizzling summer days.

Today, people eat zongzi and

in South Korea marking Dano Day are the Seoul Dano Festival, Gangneung Dano Festival in Gangwon Province, Jain Dano Festival in Gyeongsang Province and the Beopseong Dano Festival in South Jeolla Province.

The website www.gntour.go.kr says the Gangneung Dano Festival has a deep-rooted tradition of laying down friendship and co-operation for mutual benefit and love of one's home.

May 5 is actually the culmination of the festival, preparations for which begins 50 days prior on March 20 with the commencement of brewing a special liquor.

Wu's article published in *Guangming Daily* on April 14 talks about the history and customs of Chinese celebrating Duanwu Jie. It says that Duanwu Jie has long been a folk tradition to prevent and cure diseases, repel plague, remove poison, pray for health and longevity. He points out that the festival is celebrated not only by the Han people in China's mainland but also by all the overseas Chinese. “People of 28 minority nationalities such as Man, Mongolia, Tibet, Miao, Yi, Korea, and Xibo also celebrate the festival.”

Wu says the festival originated from the ancient Chinese paying their tribute to dragon. He says in order to prevent evil people wore talisman, hung

a picture of Zhong Kui, guardian against evil spirits, or put strong smelling herbs, on the door of their homes.

According to Wu, activities such as those memorializing Qu Yuan are a relatively recent addition to an ancient tradition.

All a misunderstanding?

According to the report in Tuesday's *Star Daily*, Wu says his original intention in reporting to the Ministry of Culture was to call the government's attention to the issue of folk culture and then to protect China's intangible cultural heritage, rather than objecting to the application of South Korea. “Media reports about ‘defending our ownership of the festival’ reveals our ignorance of United Nation's regulations,” he is quoted as saying. “One of the characteristics of an intangible heritage is that it is something that can be shared.”

Beijing Today has been unable to contact Wu for further comment.

Zhang Jingsi, a member of China's Japanese History Study Association, told *Beijing Today* that it is difficult to understand why it was not until another country applied to have Duanwu Jie included in the world heritage list that China moved to lodge an application for its own festival. “It is because the Chinese do not have the awareness or the confidence to

Intangible Cultural Heritage

According to UNESCO's, International Convention to Safeguard Intangible Cultural Heritage, the convention has an “invaluable role” in “bringing human beings closer together and ensuring exchange and understanding among them.”

The convention defines “safeguarding” as “measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including identification, documentation, research, preservation, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage.”

present the world with their national and folk culture,” he said. “What we need to do, but have long neglected to do, is to reflect on the issue of cultivating in the Chinese people a devotion to our own folk culture.”

The national meeting of the Preservation Program of the National and Folk Culture of China referred to in the *People's Daily* article was covered by Xinhua and other Chinese media when it was held from April 12 to 16 in Dali and Lijiang, in Yunnan Province.

A Xinhua report on April 17 quotes Vice-minister Zhou Heping talking about China's national and folk culture being challenged by western values and lifestyles at the meeting, “Now many youth are wild about celebrating western holidays such as Christmas and Valentine's Day, while many traditional days that have great cultural meaning for Chinese are neglected,” Zhou said.

An issue of preservation

In the *Guangming Daily* article Wu reiterates that the Chinese national and folk culture festivals have suffered to a certain degree in the process of the country's political reform and economic development. “Some are ignored and some are switching away from their original meaning,” he said. “Several generations of Chinese do not know the true significance of the festivals.”

Both China News Agency and *Star Daily* highlighted Wu's call for more efforts to be made in the preservation of national and folk culture. In the *Star Daily* report, Wu points out that Japan and South Korea introduced laws on folk culture preservation as early as the 1950s or 1960s. China still has no such laws.

An article published in *The Beijing News* on May 8 argues that legislation itself is not enough. “What legislation brings to traditional culture is nothing more than a room with a constant temperature. But the room itself cannot reinvigorate the traditional culture and make it a part of the public's life.”

Only when the priceless culture is deeply rooted in the minds of individuals that make up a society can it be maintained and developed.”

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Free Personal Classifieds

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printed free of charge. Email your personal classifieds (in English and Chinese) to info@ynet.com. Personal classifieds should conform to relevant laws and regulations.

Monetary Policy to Be Tightened

China's central bank announced Tuesday a decision to put into place soon an "appropriately tightened" monetary policy, a move aimed at preventing the economy from over-heating.

However the tightening will not be applied too suddenly, according to the bank.

China has long been pursuing a stable monetary policy, which has helped its economy – now the sixth largest in the world and second in Asia - grow at a blistering pace.

Now, government officials and economists are concerned that the economy could be overheating, largely on the back of soaring investment, especially in raw materials and real estate, fueled by the excessive granting of loans.

Chinese banks doled out 835.1

billion yuan (US \$100.6 billion) in new loans in the first quarter of the year, representing 32 percent of the annual target and an increase of 24.7 billion yuan (\$3 billion) from a year ago.

The growth was witnessed amid repeated central government calls to rein in bank credit and loans that supported overheating. China's economy expanded 9.7 percent in the first three months, well above the government target of 7 percent for 2004.

"In general the economic outlook is sound, characterized by a continued, fast growing GDP and upgraded economic efficiency," said a central bank report released Tuesday.

But it also pointed out some aggravating problems in the economy – too rapid growth of fixed assets, includ-

ing capital projects and factory equipment, low-level copy-cat construction in some industries and areas, a resource bottleneck and greater pressure from inflation.

Propped up by food and raw materials price increases, China's consumer price index, the most widely watched barometer on inflation, rose a modest 2.8 percent year-on-year from January to March.

By means of tightened monetary policy, the central bank said it would take corresponding measures to mop liquidity in the country's financial system to prevent loan growth.

Since last September, the central bank has announced three hikes in a row in financial institutions' mandatory reserve requirements.

Commercial banks' reserve requirement was raised to 7.5 per-

cent from 7 percent beginning April 25, meaning a loss of 110 billion yuan (\$13.3 billion) in their available funds that can otherwise be used for lending.

Tuesday's report also said the People's Bank would watch closely on the trend of commodity prices and advance market-oriented interest rate reform, promote financing through stock markets and maintain a stable yuan at a rational equilibrium.

Both broad money and narrow money are targeted to increase 17 percent this year and financial institutions are demanded to grant a combined 2.6 trillion yuan (313.3 billion dollars) in new loans for 2004. The central bank report said "these goals can be achieved."

(Xinhua)

China Moves to Curb AIDS Spread

By Hou Mingxin

The State Council issued a notice Sunday stating that the AIDS epidemic was still spreading rapidly in China and that a series of urgent measures must be taken to change the situation.

In the notice, local governments at all levels and relevant organizations are required to make combatting AIDS a key priority, and government leaders in all localities should be responsible for curbing the spread of AIDS.

"Those officials breaching their duty or covering up epidemic reports will be severely punished," the circular says, calling for the establishment of local AIDS prevention and treatment working committees in regions seriously afflicted by AIDS.

AIDS-related information will be added to current teaching programs in middle schools, vocational schools as well as colleges, the notice says.

Health departments, together with Red Cross Societies, should encourage all healthy and young citizens to engage in free blood donation. And the public security departments should vigorously intensify the fight against illegal blood selling, the notice says.

Pregnant women will receive free AIDS prevention medical services in a bid to reduce the chances of mother-to-baby HIV transmission.

Research and production of new anti-AIDS medicines will speed up and the government will make more funds available for AIDS prevention and treatment.

According to the notice, financially disadvantaged AIDS carriers, as well as their families, will receive financial aid from the government and more efforts will be exerted to eliminate social discrimination against AIDS patients.

International cooperation will be enhanced and foreign experience on AIDS prevention and treatment will be studied and introduced.

China's first AIDS/HIV was identified in 1985. The assessment report on China's AIDS prevention and control, released by Ministry of Health, shows HIV is now an epidemic affecting all the mainland's 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities.

There are 840,000 registered HIV-carriers in China, of whom 80,000 suffer from AIDS, official figures show. Some experts warn that over 10 million Chinese will be HIV-positive in 2010, unless effective measures are taken.



Shanghai municipality formally launched the construction of the Shanghai World Expo 2010 sites on May 5. Relocation of the first group of factories and residents has begun.

Photo by ImageChina

Shanghai Expo Under Legal Framework

By Chu Meng

Drafting of laws and regulations are one of the top priorities in Shanghai's preparation for hosting World Expo 2010, said an official at the Shanghai World Expo and Legal Environment Forum last Saturday.

According to Zhou Hanmin, deputy director-general of the Bureau of Shanghai World Expo Coordination, both content and procedure related to the Shanghai World Expo preparation work must accord with existing law.

Meanwhile, enhancing intellectual property rights protection of Expo's logo and slogans and other marks, promoting customs supervision on exhibits as well as establishing legal regulations on occupants of residen-

tial land are the three main points.

The adoption of such legal steps marks the end of the government's long-standing privileges in regard to setting provisional regulations and taking emergency measures in hosting national activities. It also demonstrates that all governmental behavior in such activities must fall under the framework of existing laws and regulations.

"Hosting the Expo and improving the legal environment should be two interactive processes," Zhou said, "although China has a comprehensive legal system, there are still areas concerning the Expo that are not covered by the existing laws and regulations."

Zhou, who leads the bureau's legal affairs department and a law profes-

sor himself, stressed that an event as big as World Expo will undoubtedly help enhance the legislation in related areas. It requires efforts from the whole country, not only Shanghai, so national legislation adjustment and improvement is necessary to ensure a successful Expo.

"Thousands of contracts will be signed, which will also require a lot of legal work, which the bureau will employ various law firms to take care of. We are now studying a proposal to set up a consultancy body to answer questions on various legal issues concerning Expo for countries and business people that will participate in Shanghai World Expo in 2010," deputy director-general Zhou added.

Li Danyang, post-doctoral researcher from Peking University's School of Government said, "only when state administrative power is governed by the rule of law, will China's commercial market system operate to its full potential, allowing the nation's competitiveness in the world trade market to increase."

Move to Legalize Private Investigation Services

By Chu Meng

The Ministry of Public Security is carrying out a survey covering ten major Chinese cities on the development of private investigation services, in an attempt to pave the way for legalization and regulation of the once underground industry.

The survey includes items such as scope of services, fees, investigation means and tools used by such companies, and will collect opinions from the public and legal experts.

"The private detective industry has not been legalized in China so far. The survey is regarded as a prelude to legalizing the industry," said Bai Yalin, an officer with the Sichuan Provincial Public Security Department. Bai said it was necessary

to legalize the private investigation industry because of increasing market needs. However, the scope of private detective's right of investigation as well as the investigation means they could use must first be strictly defined.

Wan Benqing, an attorney at law from Beijing Zhong Fu Law Firm told *Beijing Today* that the crucial point for such companies is to ensure the investigation means they use are justifiable and not violating other people's privacy.

"Private investigation services will become an effective complement for judicial investigation, if the industry is well regulated and gains an equal legal footing with the judicial one," said Wan.

Seventh International High-tech Expo Ready to Roll

By Su Wei

Next Friday the Seventh China Beijing International High-tech Expo will open as scheduled, the organizing committee announced Thursday.

There are more than 10 high-tech professional exhibition areas for over 2,100 high-tech enterprises, scientific research institutes and universities at the China International Exhibition Center and the China Architecture Culture Center, the main two venues for the six-day expo. As well as regular exhibitors such as Ericsson, Panasonic, LG Electronics and Beijing Orient Electronics; Samsung Electronics will participate in the exhibition for the first time, as this year's largest participant to promote its most up-to-date high-tech products.

Around 500 top names in the areas of science, technology and finance industries, and international organizations and enterprises will take part in around 25 scheduled forums.

Meanwhile five science and technology as well as economic trade talks are to be held with more than 1,000 projects to be introduced by domestic and overseas enterprises.

According to the organizing committee, the Expo will be a truly international event, not only because over 28 percent of the participating companies are international ones, but also because of the focus of the expo on cutting-edge scientific and technological issues.

UK Embassy Adopts No-Interview Student Visa Policy

By Yi Yi

Since last Thursday, students applying for visas to the UK no longer need to attend interviews at the embassy. They just present all their documents to the visa office and will be notified of their visa status on the same day. The standards used to assess the applications remain exactly the same as before, according to a British Embassy spokesperson.

Applicants should submit their documents Monday to Thursday from 9 am to 11am. Applications will be considered only on the documents presented. At 3 pm the same day, applicants will be informed of the status of their application, namely, whether their visa has been issued or refused or under special circumstances, whether an interview is required.

The new system, aiming at helping students to get visas more efficiently and conveniently, requires the applicants to prepare their documents more carefully. The interview cases are usually expected to occur when there is an inconsistency regarding supplementary materials and telephone investigation fails to resolve the problem.

The system currently only operates in the Beijing Embassy. Different procedures apply in Shanghai and Guangzhou.

Australia's Guangzhou Consulate to Change Visa Applications

By Cao Hao

Australia's Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs declared last Friday that its consulate-general in Guangzhou will cease to process certain categories of immigration visas from July 1 and from September 1. Applications by residents of seven provinces in southern China for relevant visas must be delivered to the Shanghai consulate-general after those dates.

The visa categories that will not be handled are spouse migration, child migration, other family migration, employer sponsored migration, regional sponsored migration and labor agreement migration from July 1, while adopted child migration visas will not be accepted from September 1.

Technical migration and parent migration visas will not be affected by the change. The affected provinces are Guangdong, Fujian, Hunan, Guangxi, Yunnan, Guizhou and Hainan.

All other types of visas, including visitor and temporary residence visas will continue to be handled in Guangzhou.

Guidelines Set for Renovation of Protected Areas

By Yi Yi

Blue bricks and gray tiles are to be used as the main materials for renovations in the Protected Cultural Areas in the old city of Beijing, according to a regulation issued last Saturday. The regulation provides detailed guidelines for renovations within Beijing's Second Ring Road.

Currently there are altogether 40 designated protected cultural areas in Beijing, among which 30 are within the second ring road, covering 21 percent of the old city area.

The regulation divides houses in the protected areas into two categories, ordinary houses and key houses.

For the key houses, such as protected courtyards, Chinese-style buildings, western-style buildings and scenery architectures facing the streets, the regulation requires that local customs and characteristics should be stressed. Roofs, eaves, exterior walls and doors and windows facing the street should adopt traditional Chinese styles, the paintwork and decoration should use traditional tones and colors; the courtyards and courtyard gates should accord with the original shapes and structures.

Air-conditioners, solar water heaters and television antennas should be concealed, sign boards, advertisements and transparencies which conflict with the flavor of the protected cultural areas should all be demolished.

Merger Forms Chemical Conglomerate

By Sun Yongjian

The trend towards consolidation and merging of state-owned enterprises has extended to the chemical industry since the establishment of China National Chemical Corp. (CNCC), announced at a Beijing press conference on May 9. Formed from the combination of state-owned companies China National Blue Star Corp. and China

Haohua Chemical Industrial Corp., CNCC is intended to become a powerful new player in the international market.

With a starting base of 5.7 billion yuan (\$688.4 million) in registered capital, the company aims to develop into a 300 billion yuan scaled enterprise, realizing over 100 billion yuan in both assets and sales income in the

coming three to five years, Ren Jianxin, CNCC president, said, according to a *People's Daily* report on Sunday. Ren added that further plans call for holding an overseas IPO and cracking the list of the world's top 500 enterprises.

Since the dissolving of the Ministry of Chemical Industry in 1998, domestic chemical companies have been weak and decentralized without a powerful

enterprise leading the way towards international competitiveness, a company source who claimed anonymity told *Beijing Today* Monday.

Fu Xiangsheng, CNCC provisional vice secretary, gave an optimistic prediction at the press conference that the newly formed conglomerate would be able to quickly grab a 40 percent share of the domestic market.

State to Close Auto Industry Overseer

By Sun Yongjian

The state-owned organization responsible for overseeing the domestic auto industry has become obsolete and is set to be dismantled by the national government. A source from within the China National Automotive Industry Corp. (CNAIC) who requested anonymity confirmed the news to *Beijing Today* on Monday.

CNAIC was established in 1990 to improve the centralization of the automobile industry and guard against excessive investment and has completed its commission, according to the source.

Changes in automotive industry policies and the opening of the market to foreign capital have also weakened the state-owned organization's abilities to carry out its original mandate, the source explained.

Benzes to Roll Off Local Factory Line

By Sun Yongjian

Chinese drivers will be able to purchase Mercedes-Benz sedans produced in Beijing in the near future, carmaker Beiqi Holding Company announced at a press conference in the capital on May 9. That company will cooperate with DaimlerChrysler in making about 20,000 Mercedes C and E class cars a year, thanks to Premier Wen Jiabao's signing of a deal on May 3 in Germany during his European tour.

Jurgen Schrempp, chairman of the board of DaimlerChrysler, attended the conference and said, "to construct a factory for producing Mercedes-Benz cars in China is a key part of our Asian strategy."

The announcement represented the latest step in the strategic cooperation between Beiqi and DaimlerChrysler, which began with the signing of a framework agreement by the companies last September.

Pizza Hut Suspend Domestic Franchising

By Sun Yongjian

Relatively slow expansion is likely the reason that Yum! Brands China has moved to rescind franchise rights for more than 130 Pizza Hut restaurants operating in southern China. The company announced the change on May 8 and said those outlets of the US-based pizza chain would now be run directly by Yum! Brands' domestic headquarters.

Xu Zhen, manager of Yum! Brands China's marketing department, told *Beijing Today* on Monday the group would stop granting franchise rights in the domestic market for a period of time in the interest of unifying Pizza Hut's products and brand image, meaning that consumers could expect to have nearly identical experiences at every outlet in China.

Gao Yao, Pizza Hut brand manager for the southern China market, said that Pizza Hut's development in China has been much slower than that of KFC, another major restaurant chain operated by Yum! Brands, according to a report in *Southern Daily* on May 8. He speculated that some consumers may have been dismayed by the pizza restaurants' relatively high prices.



Athens Games Seats Made in China

By Sun Yongjian

Though they may not know it, thousands of spectators at the Athens Olympics will be sitting on little pieces of China, as a domestic company is producing chairs for some of the venues for the Games and even installing them on site. Dafeng Industrial Co. of Zhejiang Province has sent 37 workers to set up the seating for the volleyball and football arenas and has a chance to win the bidding to provide the 75,000 seats for the main stadium, *Beijing Youth Daily* reported on May 9.

The seats currently being installed by the Chinese workers were all made in this country, according to Wang Weijun, Dafeng's manager for the two stadium seating projects. He added that so far 2,218 movable stadium chairs had been put in place to the satisfaction of the Athens Olympic Organization Committee.

Dafeng's Olympic seating projects, including 1,200 movable chairs for the basketball stadium and 12,000 fixed seats for the Peace and Friendship Stadium, have brought in more than 20 million yuan in revenues for the company, Wang said.

Chinese workers install domestic seating at an Athens Olympic venue. Xinhua Photo

Zongshen Revs Up Motorcycle Making with Italian Partner

By Sun Yongjian

The domestic motorcycle market, generally dominated by Japanese bikes, is set to get some Italian style thanks to a joint venture agreement signed by Chongqing-based Zongshen Industrial Group and Italy's Piaggio, announced on April 16 and reported in the *China Business Times* on April 28.

The newspaper quoted an unnamed inside source as saying that Zongshen Group had purchased a 45 percent stake in Foshan-Zongshen-Piaggio Motorcycle Co., a new company based on Piaggio and Guangzhou-based Foshan Motorcycle Factory's existing joint venture. The company will start with \$29.8 million in registered capital, 45 percent of which will come from Zongshen.

Production targets call for the new company to make 100,000 motorcycles in 2004 and reach an annual production volume of 500,000 units in the next five years. Around 200 million yuan will be invested in the construction of a manufacturing base and an engine production facility in Chongqing, with an intended annual production volume of 500,000 after a few years.

Zuo Zongshen, newly named Foshan-Zongshen-Piaggio president, was quoted as saying in the *China Business Times* report that Zongshen would be in charge of production administration and domestic market promotion while Piaggio would provide needed technology transfers and oversee international marketing.

DHL To Run In-China Deliveries

By Sun Yongjian

Competition in China's express delivery market may get even tighter following an announcement made by DHL in Shanghai on May 10 that it was entering the domestic delivery business.

"To provide home express service in China is a milestone in DHL's development in China, which marks a large step in DHL's cooperation with China National Foreign Trade Transporta-

tion Group (Sinotrans)," said Dr. Klaus Zumwinkel, chairman of Deutsche Post World Net, DHL's parent company, as quoted by Xinhua on Monday.

The Belgium-based international express giant plans to invest more than \$215 million between now and to 2008 to develop within-China delivery services, with funds going towards improving its domestic infrastructure, expanding its four port working centers, establish-

ing 14 new subsidiaries and three new main logistics centers, according to Zumwinkel.

However, some hurdles may lie ahead. China Postal Bureau's press department head, surnamed Yang, told *Beijing Today* that the Chinese government had not given official approval for foreign enterprises to enter the domestic express services market and China had made no commitments to open its postal services industry to foreign companies in entering the World Trade Organization.

Village Prospering on Antique Furniture Trade

By Zhao Hongyi

Gaobeidian, a small village by the east Fifth Ring Road, has earned wide recognition in the past several months as the home of a 1.5-kilometers long street that holds nearly 150 stores that specialize in refurbished antiques and reproduction traditional Chinese-style furniture.

Since the early 1990s, some businesspeople in the village started collecting antique furniture from the nearby provinces of Hebei, Shanxi, Inner Mongolia and Tianjin. Local craftsmen then cleaned and refurbished the worn pieces and sold them at low prices, attracting lots of interest, particularly from wealthy Beijingers and foreign residents of the city.

Rising demand brought in antique merchants from Shanghai and Anhui, Zhejiang and Jiangsu Prov-

inces, who set up shops along the street to offer old furniture found in their territories. Other craftsman responded to the boom in business by making reproductions of old pieces and new furniture inspired by antique designs.

Today, most of these shops still operate in traditional Chinese style, meaning they have street-front counters with workshops in their backyards. At many stores, customers can order custom-made pieces to exactly fit their requirements at low prices.

"Last year, total annual sales volume along this little street reached 120 million yuan," Zhang Fusheng, party secretary of the village, told *Beijing Today*. "We now export our products to more than 100 fixed customers in a dozen countries and regions of the world."

As the ranks of customers

increase, Zhang and his colleagues are working to make their village's furniture trade a source for tourism. Last September, Gaobeidian held its first antique furniture festival and the second is slated for later this year.

Nearly 30 million yuan has been invested in the ongoing renovation and improvement of the street. "We are going to transform the street from purely a place of business into a place for the celebration of traditional culture," Zhang said.



Antiques are cheap and plentiful in Gaobeidian. Photo by Zhao Hongyi

P&G Buys Remaining Stake in China Joint Venture

By Sun Yongjian

Cincinnati-based Procter & Gamble Co. will shell out \$1.8 billion to gain the remaining 20 percent stake in its domestic joint venture held by former partner Hutchinson Whampoa China, US-based *American City Business Journals* reported on May 11.

The joint venture, P&G-Hutchinson, was established in 1988 when P&G first entered the Chinese mainland market. P&G initially held a 69 percent stake in the company and gradually increased its ownership to 80 percent by 1997.

Under its agreement with Hutchinson, P&G had the option to buy out the business between 2007 and 2017, but the company said it believes a later buy-out would have come with a significantly higher price tag, according to the report.

That article also said P&G spokesman Doug Shelton noted the purchase price amounts to \$2 billion net of minority interest and related obligations that would be eliminated as a result of the transaction. The deal is expected to be sealed by June 18.

Fuji Xerox Expects High Returns from Expo

By Su Wei

Three years after entering the Chinese market, Fuji Xerox (China) is set to take a major part in the Seventh China Beijing International High-tech Expo, to be held in the capital May 21 to 26, said Edward Lee, vice president of the company, at a press conference Wednesday afternoon in Beijing.

Recalling the Japan-based company's first participation in the 2001 expo, which paved the way for introducing the Fuji Xerox brand name to Chinese customers, Lee said the company was confident that participating this year would help improve its brand recognition in this country.

"In our 230-square-meter exhibition area, we will show the Chinese the fastest digital color printing system in the world and the first digital color multifunction machine in the world combining functions such as faxing, printing, scanning, copying and security," he explained. "These products have sold very well outside of China in the past few months."

Report Show Lots of Leasing in Capital Market

By Johnny Zhang

Leasing continued to be active in Beijing's office and residential markets in the first quarter of 2004, according to Jones Lang LaSalle's latest Greater China Property Index report unveiled last week.

The report said international companies, particularly in the IT, legal, financial and insurance sectors, were snapping up lots of office space in the Central Business District (CBD), the Third Embassy District and along East Chang'an Avenue.

In the Zhongguancun area, landlords were striving to attract new clients through flexible terms and rental discounts.

According to the report, in the residential leasing market, demand for high-end residential units was high with multinational companies, particularly from the telecommunications, automobile, banking and other financial sectors, continuing expansion and bringing more senior staffs to the capital.

Singaporean Developer Delves into Local Property

By Su Wei

CapitaLand, a Singapore-based property developer, launched its wholly-owned subsidiary CapitaLand China in Beijing last week.

The company has invested around 12 billion yuan in the Chinese mainland over the past decade, 80 percent of which has gone to in Shanghai. "In recognition of Beijing's over-10 percent annual economic growth and the business opportunities presented by the 2008 Olympic Games, we decided to enter the capital," said CapitaLand President Liew Mun Leong at the launch ceremony at the Diaoyutai Guest House.

The group's first local project is a huge residential complex near the Olympic Park in the north of Beijing.

China: Market Economy Status

Brussels, May 7 (AP) - Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao told European Union officials they would be making an economic mistake if they did not recognize China's "market economy status" officially.

Wen said EU approval of China's market economy status within the World Trade Organization and the dropping of the ban on the arms trade "will do good not only for China but also for the European Union."

Prodi said the EU would speed up examining China's request to be given market economy status, and said a preliminary judgment could come next month.

If the EU rules China has met its criteria, it would make it harder for the Europeans to hit back at China for dumping cheap products onto their market.

At their meeting, China and the EU signed four trade and customs cooperation agreements, with the aim of creating, as Prodi put it, "the single biggest" trading relationship "in the world."

The customs cooperation deal aims to combat endemic piracy

of goods, from pirated designer wear to movies and music CDs. Beijing, which joined the WTO in 2001, claims it has started to stop the illegal use of trademarks, copyrights and other intellectual property by Chinese companies.

Wen also lobbied Prodi to try and lift a 15-year arms embargo.

"I explained the issue is currently under discussion between the member states," said Prodi.

EU trade commissioner Pascal Lamy pushed the Chinese delegation to allow European companies



Wen Jiabao and Pascal Lamy at the EU headquarters in Brussels. AFP Photo

to bid for construction contracts for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Other agreements involve China's coke exports that are badly needed by European steel producers. (Constant Brand)

Analyst's Take:

It is a remedy for the mistake made in China's WTO accession.

In the bilateral agreement with the US for the accession, the US required a period of 15 years after the entry in which China would be accorded the status of a "non market economy (NME)".

After entering the WTO at the end of 2001, China found the number of anti-dumping cases against its exports had increased rapidly worldwide because under NME status, WTO members do not

recognize the low costs and high efficiency in China.

The endless anti-dumping cases and tariffs are pressing China's exports to sell at lower prices, further marginalizing the already low profits.

More seriously, more countries are following the practices of the US and EU, which is driving China's exports into a more difficult corner.

— Hu Guocheng, deputy director, Institute of American Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

EU: Give Us Your Coal

cosmetics, the two sides avoided a WTO case by negotiating a compromise. The US in March filed the first WTO complaint by any nation against China, over semiconductors.

"We've told the Chinese that the restrictions break WTO rules and they must be removed," Arancha Gonzalez, Lamy's spokeswoman, told a news conference in Brussels.

The EU says China's export restrictions, which are based on licenses, harm European steel producers such as Arcelor and Germany's ThyssenKrupp AG. The price of Chinese coke-export licenses has surged to \$200 a ton from \$1 to \$5 a ton last year,

forcing coke prices up to \$450 a ton from \$120 a ton in 2003, Gonzalez said. Almost a third of EU coke imports -- or 4.4 million tons -- came from China in 2003, she said.

Chinese restrictions on coke exports could reflect the country's need to keep sufficient supplies to fuel its booming industry, Gonzalez said. The Chinese government boosted steel production by a fifth last year when the country's economy grew 9.1 percent, the fastest pace in seven years.

China will export between 8.3 million tons and 9.6 million tons of coke worldwide this year, according to the EU.

Online Observers:

— It's not a fair and free trade. Why doesn't the EU end its arms embargo to China? Isn't that a violation of WTO rules?

— The EU and US design and produce their own types of DC plugs and home appliances under the name of safety and obstruct imports from foreign countries.

Under the name of dumping, the EU drove off China-produced TV sets. Is it fair?

— The US raised the unfair trade case against China on semi-conductors and now the EU forces us to sell more coking coal to them! Their only purpose is to rob more natural resources and force us to follow what they want.

— comments on sina.com

Pension Reform Bill Passed in Japan

Tokyo, May 11 (AP) - Japan's lower house of Parliament approved a bill Tuesday intended to reform the country's rickety pension system, amid a scandal over missed payments that has led to the resignation of two high-profile politicians.

The bill aims to save the system from collapse by gradually raising premiums over the next 14 years while lowering the minimum level of benefits and is expected to go before the upper house in coming weeks.

On Monday, Naoto Kan, head of the Democratic Party, Japan's largest opposition party, announced he would resign as party chief after admitting he missed payments to the national pension system. Last week, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda resigned after admitting he had unwittingly missed payments.

Kan had resisted quitting but pressure built over the weekend for him to atone for failing to make payments while he was health and welfare minister in the 1990s.

Kan is one of an expanding group of Japanese politicians who have confessed to missing pension premium payments. More importantly, the damaging admissions come just two months before elections for the upper house of Parliament.

Analyst's Take:

The pension scandal in Japan reminds us of the \$1.8 trillion hole in the US pension system. It tells us that even the most sophisticated welfare systems have problems with missing payments.

For instance, over 70 million people in Japan have to pay one type of pension premium and over 18 million retirees are receiving the benefits.

China should learn the lessons in building its own welfare systems.

In Japan, the pension fund consists of three parts: payments by corporate employees, civil servants and self-employers. Most individuals have to pay in the three different ways due to their different status during their lives. That also explains, in part, why nearly 40 percent of Japanese have missed the odd payment here and there.

Ironically, the scandals in Japan resulted from debates between the ruling coalition parties and the opposition on a new law to simplify the structure of the pension system. The scandals will have a great impact on the upcoming senate election.

— Sun Baoyin, China Central Television reporter in Tokyo, Japan



The annual global film industry carnival, Cannes Film Festival, kicks off on May 12 in Cannes, southern France.

An employee of Chopard jewelers holds the Cannes Film Festival Palme d'Or 2004 designed and executed by Chopard at the company's headquarters in Meyrin near Geneva, Switzerland, Wednesday, May 11, 2004.

The coveted awards will be announced on May 23 when the festival ends.

Xinhua / AFP Photo

Pick Up a Book, or Don't

New York, May 13 (AP) - Not even Harry Potter could prevent a big drop in book sales in the US in 2003.

With a struggling economy and competition for time from other media, 23 million fewer books were sold last year than in 2002, according to a report issued Wednesday by the Book Industry Study Group, a not-for-profit research organization.

Sales fell to 2.222 billion books, down from 2.245 billion in 2002. The decline was in both hardcovers and paperbacks, in children's books and general trade releases. Even sales of

religious titles, often cited as a growing part of the publishing industry, were flat.

"We believe this is due to a variety of factors, the biggest being the used book market," said Albert N. Greco, an industry consultant and a professor of business at the graduate school of Fordham University.

"People are looking for bargains, especially in college textbooks, where we believe millions of used books are being bought. Also, books are competing with magazines, cable, radio, music and movies."

Thanks to higher prices, net rev-

enues did rise to \$27.8 billion in 2003, a 2.5 percent increase. They are projected to reach \$33.5 billion in 2008.

But the 2003 figures show a continued trend of increasing production and declining demand. More than 100,000 books were published last year, yet fewer people were buying them. Sales dropped despite such high-profile releases as "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix," the memoirs of Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, and Dan Brown's religious thriller, "The Da Vinci Code."

"One book cannot make you," Greco said. "You have to look at how many books are not selling well. There's a parallel to Hollywood, where a lot of movies flop."

The Book Industry Study Group's report, titled "Book Industry Trends 2004," includes several downbeat assessments from publishing officials. Bob Miller, president of Hyperion, declares that "the pie we're all looking to share is not growing," and "flat is the new up."

Barbara Marcus, publisher of Scholastic Children's Book Group, which releases the Potter books in the United States, said she was disappointed by the impact of J.K. Rowling's fantasy series on the overall market.

"People thought Harry might have changed kids' reading habits," she said. "It's happened to a small degree, but not to the level we've hoped."

(Hillel Italie)

DaimlerChrysler to Sell Hyundai

Seoul, May 12 (Reuters) - DaimlerChrysler AG said on Wednesday it would sell a \$1 billion stake in South Korea's top car firm, Hyundai Motor Co, further scaling down the German-American company's ties with car makers in Asia.

The collapse of Hyundai's tie-up with Daimler is likely to push the South Korean car maker into looking for a new partner to achieve its goal of achieving a top-five industry ranking.

(Kim Kyoung-wha)

Fed Fines UBS \$100 Million

Washington/Zurich (Reuters) - UBS, Switzerland's largest bank, will pay a \$100 million fine to settle allegations that it illegally transferred freshly printed dollar notes to countries subject to US economic sanctions, the Federal Reserve and UBS said on Monday.

The transfers of banknotes from the Fed's account had involved trades with Cuba, Iran, Libya and Yugoslavia, according to UBS. But it refused to admit guilt to the allegations as part of the settlement.



Reuters Photo

Delta Facing Bankruptcy

Atlanta, May 11 (AP) - Delta Air Lines said in a report to the Securities and Exchange Commission Monday that it may have to seek bankruptcy protection if it doesn't get significant wage cuts from pilots.

Delta, the US' third-largest airline, has lost more than \$3 billion and laid off 16,000 employees in the last three years. In the first quarter, it lost \$387 million.

(Harry R. Weber)

Austrian Supermarket Launches Own Airline

Vienna, May 12 (AFP) - Austrian supermarket chain Billa said Wednesday it was launching its own airline, the first of its kind worldwide.

"The airline is used to serve the strong increase in our travel agency business," Billa said.

The airline, called LTU Billa, has been operating since Saturday in partnership with the Germany airline LTU based in Duesseldorf.

MCI to Further Cut 7,500 Jobs

McLean, Virginia, May 11 (AP) - MCI plans to eliminate 7,500 jobs later this year to cut costs. The company ran a loss of \$388 million in the first quarter, the company said Monday.

MCI employs about 50,000 workers, and in March announced layoffs of about 4,500 workers.

The company emerged last month from nearly two years of bankruptcy protection, and having changed its name from WorldCom.

(Mathew Barakat)

Dangerous Driver Gets License Revoked

By Shan Jinliang

On May 4, Li Long (pseudonym) surrendered to the traffic police of Mentougou District following a hit-and-run accident and became the city's first driver to have his license revoked for life in accordance with the new national Law on Road Traffic Safety, that took effect May 1.

Li turned himself in 16 hours after he hit a pedestrian while driving his white Volkswagen Jetta car on Chengzi Dajie in Mentougou District at around 5:40 pm on May 3. He sped from the scene and the pedestrian later died in the hospital.

The accident caused a serious

traffic tie-up along the street. When police arrived at the scene, witnesses were able to give the last four numbers of the offending vehicle's license plate. The police narrowed the possible suspects to a list of four before naming Li Hong, a resident of Tongzhou District, as the most likely perpetrator.

The police located Li Hong the next morning, at which point he told them that the car actually belonged to his nephew, Li Hong, who had already turned himself in by that time.

The penalty for the crime of hit-and-run has been raised to lifetime

cancellation of driving rights in the new Law on Road Traffic Safety. However, even since that rule has come into effect, hit and runs and continued to plague Beijing and other major Chinese cities.

Just eight hours after the law became official, a driver in Chongzhou, Sichuan Province struck and injured a pedestrian and sped from the scene. Police tracked down the driver, Wang Rui, later that afternoon, giving Wang the dubious honor of being the first person in China to have his license revoked in keeping with national law.

Also subject to harsher punish-

ment under the new regulations are drivers caught for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Under increased vigilance against drunk driving, Fengtai District police apprehended seven inebriated drivers on May 8, the *Beijing Evening News* reported on Tuesday.

That same night, famed cross-talk performer Niu Zhenhua was killed in a car accident when his vehicle was crushed by a truck driven by a drunk man.

Last year, 343 people were injured and 77 killed by drunk drivers in Beijing.



Photos and swords were among the pieces shown in the road-side exhibition.

Photo by Ouyang Xiaofei

Short Street Show Shines Light on Japanese Invasion

By Shan Jinliang

A short-lived street exhibition revived tragic memories and plenty of anti-Japanese sentiment among some Beijingers on May 5. Rusty bombs, Japanese army officers' swords, well-preserved old magazines, a military-issue aluminum lunch box and nearly 60 photos of Japanese soldiers killing Chinese were among the items displayed in the informal event on the history of the Japanese invasion of China in the 1930s set up outside a small building in the Shatan area of Dongcheng District.

By no coincidence, the red building behind the exhibition was the headquarters of the Japanese army when it launched its nationwide invasion of China. The show was organized by Ren Danjue, the grandson of a man lost during the Japanese occupation and an avid collector of artifacts from the turbulent era.

Ren, 55, a resident of a rural village outside Dengfeng, Henan Province, set up the event along with four of his neighbors. He told the *Beijing News* during the show that he wanted Beijingers to be able to see the pieces from the Japanese invasion, but was not granted access to legitimate museums, forcing him to display the items on the roadside.

Dongcheng District Police forced the show to shut down later at 6 pm on grounds that Ren had not informed them of the unregistered event. Two days later, the show moved to the campus of Beijing University, but Ren packed up and left after a few hours to return home to take care of personal business.

Ren's grandfather disappeared after being taken for forced labor by the Japanese army and his father was also conscripted to feed the invaders' horses, according to the *Beijing News* article.

Over many years, Ren has amassed a large collection of Japanese war artifacts, including more than 200 photographs and over 100 pieces such as bayonets, bullets, shrapnel and coins.

Beijing University was the venue of Ren's first local show on September 18, 2001, timed to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the start of the invasion in 1931. Later, he organized similar events on the campuses of Tsinghua University and other institutions of higher education in Beijing.

The most recent exhibition sparked varied responses among its visitors. A graduate student from the China Academy of Social Sciences surnamed Hu told the *Beijing Times* that he did not understand why the villagers would come to hold the show, since all kinds of information about the invasion was available on the Internet. One elderly onlooker, surnamed Kang, said young people needed to be reminded of China's history since many were forgetting the war.

In a telephone interview with *Beijing Today* on Wednesday, Zhong Haoding, one of the exhibition co-organizers, said Ren would return to Beijing on Friday to organize shows at 10 local universities including the Beijing University of Science and Technology and Beijing University of Post and Telecommunications.

"If anyone offers support," said Zhong, "we will continue to hold the show in Beijing until May 28, when we will head to Guangzhou to commemorate the day when the Japanese started air bombing that city (in 1937)."



Photo by Qian Bingge

Double-decker Love

By Zhou Ying

Local man Wei Guo delivered his bride, Song Jia, to their wedding celebration last Thursday on a double-decker bus in which the two first met five years ago.

The No.2 route bus, decorated with red roses and colorful ribbons, led a six-vehicle motorcade that cruised down Chang'an Avenue at around 10 am that morning, *Beijing Youth Daily* reported on April 7. When the bus reached the site of the party, the Yanjing Hotel, Wei carefully carried his bride down the narrow stairs from the bus' top floor.

The driver told *Beijing Youth Daily* it was the first time during his 20 year of driving to pilot a wedding convoy. Curious passersby crowded outside the Yanjing Hotel to check out the wedding bus and watch the happy bride and groom emerge from their unusual ride.

Wei said that while discussing plans for their wedding, he and Song both struck on the idea of traveling in the bus in which they met, calling the double-decker bus their "Cupid."

'Big Head Baby' Brand Bad News for Local Dairy

By Zhou Ying

The latest victim in the big head baby health crisis, in which several infants have died as a result of ingesting sub-standard milk powder, is a local dairy company. Daxing District-based Beijing Xingqi Foods Co. has seen sales of its "Datou Wawa," or "Big Head Baby," yogurt products plummet, even though the company has no connection to the makers of the poor powder that has caused the heads of many infants to drastically swell and drawn the stern attention of Premier Wen Jiabao and other top Chinese leaders.

Over 170 previously healthy babies in rural areas of Anhui Province have suffered from seriously swollen heads and 13 have died of nutritional deficiencies since last May as a result of being fed sub-standard milk power, as *Beijing Today* first reported last Friday.

In widespread media coverage of the problem, the victims have been dubbed "big head babies," and other cases have been discovered in Shandong, Sichuan, Fujian and Hunan Provinces.

The sad events raise the question of why the local company would choose such an inappropriate name for its yogurt.

"It's a complete coincidence. Actually, we had registered 'Big Head Baby' with the China Patent and Trademark Office last year. The name was inspired by the popular cartoon TV program entitled *Big Head Son and Small Head Dad*, which features a clever and lovely boy with a big head," Wang Xingwei, marketing manager of Beijing Xingqi Foods, told *Beijing Today* on Monday.

According to Wang, daily sales of the products reached around 5,000 boxes of yogurt before the "big head baby" problem came to light. "Since the incident, many customers have stopped buying our products, which has been a heavy blow. Daily sales have dropped to 1,000 boxes," he added.

"We do not want to change our brand. The costs of changing packaging would be high, but at the same time we are afraid that consumers would think we were changing the name to cover having poor quality products. We're in a real dilemma," Wang said.

On Sunday, 24 wholesalers suspected of selling fake milk powder in Fuyang, Anhui were arrested. Public security officers there so far have uncovered 38 cases related to sales of fake milk powder, destroyed four production sites for fake milk powder and apprehended a total of 47 people involved in the crimes since mid-April.



Photo by Jia Ting

Migrant Workers' Moms Invited to Capital for Mother's Day

By Shan Jinliang

To honor unsung rural moms, the Beijing Government brought 48 mothers of select migrant workers from around China to the capital last weekend for a two-day free tour for Mother's Day.

The lucky invitees were selected from the mothers of roughly 3.5 million migrant workers from 14 provinces currently employed in Beijing.

Deputy Party Secretary of Beijing Municipality Long Xinming praised

the great contributions of the workers to the city's construction in a meeting with the mothers on Saturday afternoon, added their achievements are not only a result of their hard work, but also of being raised well.

The honored women visited Tian'anmen Square, the Great Hall of the People, Chairman Mao's Memorial Hall, the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace on Sunday, and enjoyed feasts organized by the Dongcheng and Xicheng District gov-

ernments on Saturday and Sunday.

The migrant workers chosen come from a variety of fields - some joined in the battle against the SARS virus in 2003, some are experienced local security guards, and a few even have founded schools for children of other migrant workers. One such hero is Li Xiaoliang, who came to Beijing in 1999 and he established a school for migrant workers' children in 2001. More than 400 students are now enrolled in Li's growing school.

Famed Painter Victim of Strange Robbery

By Dong Nan

Four thieves armed with knives and a gun forced their way into the home of painter Wu Dongkui on the morning of May 9, forced him to sign forms claiming he had borrowed a total of 470,000 yuan from an unknown person and stole his new car and other items.

At 11 am that day, Wu, 50, was at home with his housekeeper when Zhao Liang, a man who had come to Wu's house before, knocked on the door. Beijing Star Daily reported on Monday. Zhao and Wu talked for ten minutes, after which Zhao left and came back a few minutes later. He told Wu he had brought three friends, but before the artist could respond, the men rushed into the house, pushed Wu and his maid onto the living room sofa and told them not to move.

When Wu asked them what they wanted, the three men only responded by brandishing large knives and waving them in front of his face. One man then used his knife to sever the

house's phone line.

A thief took out three unsigned forms that read Wu had borrowed a total of 470,000 yuan from a person whose name Wu cannot remember. When He refused to sign, one man cut a deep gash into his wrist. Fearing for his life, Wu signed his name to the forms and stamped each with his fingerprint using an inkpad provided by the careful thieves.

Using the forms Wu signed, the criminals could later legally force him to pay them the supposedly borrowed sum if the police did not get involved.

One of the criminals pulled a pistol from his bag and demanded Wu hand over the keys to his new Audi car.

At 12:20 pm, Zhao Liang took the keys and left. Wu heard him told the three men, "Watch him and leave at least two hours after me to make sure he does not call the police," he told *Beijing Star Daily*.

After Zhao left, the three men robbed Wu house of all the jewelry

and cash they could find, then moved Wu and his housekeeper into the bedroom and cut his bed sheets into strips they used to tightly tie his hands and feet. They then put a duster cloth in Wu's mouth, similarly bound his housekeeper and put her into the bathroom.

Before fleeing the scene, they told Wu that if he dared call the police, they would kill everyone in his family within three days.

Wu managed to free himself after 40 minutes and called for help. A nearby person passed him a mobile phone through his window and he called the police.

"I'm not afraid. I have to stand up because I want them to be arrested quickly so they can't hurt other people," Wu told *Beijing Star Daily* the day after the crime.

Wu's famed traditional Chinese paintings are hung in Zhongnanhai, the Great Hall of the People, Diaoyutai State Guesthouse and China National Museum of Fine Arts.

Brown Bear Attacks Bus of Zoo Tourists

By Zhang Jianzhong

Tourists on a routine bus tour through the Beijing Badaling Safari World outdoor zoo on May 3 got a little closer to nature than they may have liked when a massive brown bear attacked their vehicle and shattered the bus' glass door.

No one was injured in the incident. When the bus entered the zoo's bear observation area, one large specimen suddenly sprang at the bus and struck the bus door with its enormous paw. The door was the only part of the bus not covered with protective wire netting and ended up succumbing to a few



This bear may have attacked to grab a live chicken meal.

Photo by Wang Wei

more of the bear's fierce attacks.

As the 33 frightened passengers cowered, the driver began constantly moving the bus backwards and for-

wards to prevent further attacks. However, the impaired bus was not able to actually escape from the scene for another 10 minutes until other zoo staff arrived and drove away the bear.

"We think the bear was attracted by a live chicken inside a iron wire cage placed within sight near the door of the sightseeing bus. The driver told us if we wanted to see how such a beast of prey makes short work of its food, we could buy a chicken or duck and watch a member of the staff feed it to the animals," one of the terrified tourists, Zhang Yanrong, told *Beijing Today* in a telephone interview Monday.

By Zhou Ying

There have been more and more reports in recent years of people threatening to throw themselves from buildings or other structures unless their demands are met, such as unpaid workers demanding their wages. A crowd usually gathers, police are summoned, the media arrive, and sometimes the people get what they're asking for. The public security bureau of Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi Province, has decided it's fed up with this kind of thing so it released an announcement on April, defining such threats to commit suicide as an offense against social order. Offenders will be fined up to 200 yuan or placed in custody for 15 days by the police.

An investigation conducted by the local government in Guangzhou found that many people just intend to gain their personal ends with threats to commit suicide. The government must then expend a certain amount of financial resources and manpower in protecting and rescuing them.

According to a probe conducted by *Beijing Youth Daily* last Saturday, most people approve of the announcement in Xi'an. They hold the opinion that to threaten to commit suicide will indeed disturb public order. The majority of people believed that making it illegal can also help protect against people placing themselves in danger, and can effectively prevent suicide from happening so frequently. More than two million people attempt suicide in China every year, and it's the fifth biggest cause of death in the country.

However, some oppose the announcement, saying that it may bring about unwelcome side effects, and cannot help people out of desperation.

Xing Chuan, an expert with the administrative study research institute in Renmin University

I think it is understandable that more and more people threaten to commit suicide to defend their rights. This new high-handed policy can only provide temporary social stability. It won't get to the root of the problem.

Human lives are precious and short. Nobody would place their life in danger unless there are no other alternatives. The only reason for this is that effective ways for people to find solutions to their problems are becoming fewer and fewer.

For government and society, the problem is how to provide fair, effective, and convenient avenues for people to defend their rights and interests.

This kind of desperation indicates that there are no such avenues. Local governments will always block ways for people to sue them or appeal to higher authorities for help. When the rights of ordinary people are violated, sometimes they have no choice but to threaten to commit suicide.

There is no doubt that the announcement released in Xi'an will increase the cost of such acts. This will result in oppressing people's desire to defend their rights, and it will not appease the resentment of people whose rights have been infringed.

There is no doubt that threatening to commit suicide disturbs social order. But it is the government and society that should take the main responsibility.

Sang Jinhang, an official from a council office in Shandong Province.

In my opinion, this act cannot solve the problem of public security. Instead it will shift the conflict to another direction. People who threaten to commit suicide must already be facing difficulties, but I believe they still hope to resolve their problems. Although they have made an improper choice to solve the problem, they still deserve sympathy. We should not apply an ironhanded policy to punish them.

In addition, it's slightly ridiculous. Just imagine if a person faces a severe punishment after being rescued, even if their rights have not been upheld. Will they accept such a consequence? Or will they try and commit suicide again? Will people facing this situation actually commit suicide instead of just threatening to do so?

All these people threatening to jump to their death shows there is a flaw in China's existing law. Making this behavior illegal will not solve the problem. Establishing a positive and effective legal system requires broad social efforts rather than an ordinance.

Zhang Weihua, a postgraduate in law from Beijing University

I think the question is whether people are entitled to dispose of their life freely. According to Civil Law, there is no need to interfere with people who want to commit suicide. But if it disturbs social order, I think the police should deal with them. Therefore I think we cannot treat every case the same way.

For instance, a man who wanted to commit suicide climbed onto a high voltage wire tower in Guangdong province in January this year, resulting in a one-hour power cut in the local area. I think he deserves severe punishment.

Mr.Xia, a graduate student from China University of Politics and Law

I agree with this announcement. According to China's constitution, committing suicide is illegal. We can analogize it with euthanasia: allowing it is the same as saying that people have the right to end their life. In China, euthanasia is illegal. This announcement can make people understand that people should bear responsibility for disturbing social order.

Wang Yongjin, a law student at Beijing Industry and Commerce University

I do not agree that this announcement will cut the number of people threatening to commit suicide. Just imagine if a person really does not want to be alive; does he or she really care about being fined or taken into custody? The way to solve the problem is for the government to fund counseling centers to offer psychotherapy service. Anyway, the government should play a leading role in problem solving, and they should spare no effort to make these people realize that life is beautiful and full of hope.

Zhang Yanping, deputy director of Beijing psychological crisis research and intervention center

As China develops, the government is paying more attention to people's psychological health. To commit suicide is one of the choices when people confront difficulties, but we are under an obligation to say that it is also the worst one, and there are many other better ones.

Our research showed that people who want to commit suicide feel that nobody can understand their sufferings. Therefore we will provide a place for them to confide in us. We listen attentively to our patients, which is a crucial means of treatment. The ultimate objective of our center is to make people treasure life and live with optimism.

Should Suicide be a Crime?



Last month, a woman in Hangzhou threatened to throw herself from a building, before policemen rescued her



Photo by Photocom

Too Much of a Good Thing?

By Chu Meng

A teacher in charge of a senior class at Beijing 171 Middle School has been attracting attention recently for a revolutionary educational method: if a boy and a girl in her class like each other, she lets them sit next to each other. Even though she's been doing this for three years, it's only been picked up by the media recently and a fierce debate has sprung up.

Young love, known as "zaolian", has long been controversial in China. The traditional attitude is to discourage it strongly, lest young people should be led astray. But the teacher, Zhang Lin, thought it might be good to let students learn how to handle the balance between their studies and their affections, thus taking responsibility for their lives.

Zhang's new education method began in 2001. Now the pairs of students who she allowed to sit together have made notable progress, both in their studies and in other aspects. However, the school is being careful not to comment

on whether or not they approve of this approach. No other teachers at the school are as flexible regarding young love as Zhang.

A leader in the school declined a reporter's interview from Beijing Today. He said the school had declined all interviews from the media, because the matter had brought about such hot discussions, and inspired such vigorous opinions, both positive and negative.

Does Zhang's laissez-faire attitude towards young love indicate progress in the traditional education system? Or should it be stamped out immediately? Opinions follow:

Zhang Lin, teacher in charge of a senior class at Beijing 171 Middle School

I began to seat a boy and a girl side by side in the classroom from three years ago. In 2001, I found an outgoing girl was fond of a boy in the same class, and the boy was also fond of the girl. Their classmates told me that they were "in love". I didn't separate them or forbid them from getting together, even though that would

have been the normal thing to do among most parents, teachers and middle schools in china. I organized for their seats to be next to each other, and did the same for other pairs in the class.

Meanwhile, I told them that I thought they were grown-ups, and had to be mature. And I also said I was confident they would be able to balance the relationship between their studies and their affections for each other. I haven't seen any fall off in their diligence or examination results. Some of them even made remarkable progress.

Pu Xinfeng, a 39-year-old accountant and mother of a high school boy

A middle school student is in the midst of adolescence. Therefore, teacher Zhang's measures do little good and could turn out to be very harmful.

My boy showed a tendency towards zaolian previously. And he already was not the type of person who was dedicated to studying. After he started seeing a girl who was in his class, his study performance became much worse. So I thought, for a few top students with strong self-control, teacher Zhang's methods might be workable. But for most students it is not. Seating them together will only bring a bad influence for them. Therefore, as a parent, I hope the school and the teacher stop this practise.

Though certain students in Zhang's class may have made progress in their studies, that doesn't mean her methods are working. It is a seemingly humanitarian method of education by teachers. But in fact it is irresponsible to high school students who are growing up. As we all know, these relationships rarely last, so it's not good to encourage love among middle school students who are immature psychologically and biologically.

Liu Junhong, a maths teacher at Beijing October First Middle School

As a teacher myself I can say Zhang's story is not unique. This kind of love among teenagers is very common in high schools. We teachers can comprehend this phenomenon and be generous. Early affections between young boys and girls are no longer seen as "moral mistakes" as they were in the old days.

But we don't have to teach students how to balance studies and affections by means of seating them together. Aren't there any better ways? Since they are already in the same class, there's not much use seating them much closer. Zaolian is understandable and respectable, but to encourage it is a dubious education method.

Love needs rational sense, which is a branch of knowledge requiring experience. Students need

guidance here as well. Education demands respect and understanding, but it also involves control. Without control, it will become indulgence. "Student-orientation" does not mean students deciding everything about their education and does not deny the leading role played by the teacher.

Ouyang Ping, 48-year-old senior middle school teacher and dean of Beijing October First Middle School

I have been teaching in senior middle school for more than 20 years. And I myself am the parent of a boy who is in grade three. I think Zhang Lin over-simplified and idealized the matter of love among students. Simply seating a boy and a girl together is not education, and it doesn't encourage greater responsibility.

As teachers, it is right to respect and understand students psychologically. But respect does not mean pushing the boat along with the current. In fact, it grants these young lovers a kind of social approval. At the same time it provides them with an excessively intimate environment in classrooms and inevitably generates uncomfortable feelings among the rest of the single students. Try to put yourself in their shoes. What would the single ones feel? Psychologically, adolescent ones have a strong impulse to imitate others and behave in a way that majorities do.

Ge Fan, a postgraduate from Beijing Normal University's Department of Psychology

I agree with Zhang's method. Every youngster goes through this period. China's social environment is now far different from the one in which our mothers and fathers grew up. Forty to fifty years ago, boys and girls seated separately in classrooms were not allowed to talk to each other. Most of them found lovers through parents and friends.

From a psychological point of view, I can see three positive effects of seating boys and girls who like each other together. Biologically, when a person sits close to another one whom he or she is in fond of, their bodies will secrete hormones. This means mental energy will be stimulated and concentrated. Thus, their attention will be more focused, their minds will be more dynamic and their efficiency will be improved. In other words, everybody wants to give a good impression to the person they love.

Second, it's an incentive for students to work hard to justify their teacher's confidence in them. Thirdly, it makes the students more enthusiastic about school and studying. Psychologically, students have a natural sense of belonging in their classes. This method will also make them work harder.

By Dong Nan

Problems facing agriculture, the countryside and peasants in China are well known. But what people might not be aware of is the growing urgency of the problem in suburban areas of Beijing.

A report released last month by a research group set up by the Beijing Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference found that in the course of industrialization and urbanization, more and more suburban peasants have been losing their land. These peasants are categorized as "three-nos"; no land, no job, no welfare.

Corruption

According to the research, there are three ways in which Beijing peasants have been losing their land.

Probably the least painful is when the national or municipal government requisitions their land to build real estate, industry projects or infrastructure like roads or railways. From 1998 to July 2003, this kind of acquisition took up 18,006 hectares in Beijing.

"Things are not so serious in this kind of situation," said Zhang Jiaying, leader of the research group who published the report. "Acquisitions made by governments are based on law, and governments pay compensation to the peasants and arrange jobs and welfare for them."

However, Zhang pointed out that even in this situation, compensation payments for the peasants were sometimes withheld by leaders of villages, on various dubious pretexts.

The second kind is when Beijing's municipal government requires peasants to plant trees in their land for environmental protection. Though the land still belongs to the peasants, there's not much they can do with it.

Besides, the fee the government pays for peasants to maintain these eco-forests is low, about 120 yuan per mu (about 0.067 hectares) every year. Many peasants have complained that this money barely covers the cost of irrigation.

The third situation, which is the most damaging, is when village committees contract out local land to non-local companies to develop non-agricultural industries. Often this is done without consulting the peasants and results in the destruction of the land. In this situation, there are numerous legal loopholes allowing officers of village committees to siphon off funds and take advantage of the regulations. The media has reported on a number of scandals arising from this problem.

On April 7 this year, Sun Shuxiang was surprised when she returned to her home in Yangfang Village, Fengtai District, to find her field had been turned into a giant pit. Her



Photo by Photocome

Life on the Bottom Rung

In the course of industrialization and urbanization, more and more suburban peasants have been losing their land. These peasants are categorized as "three-nos"; no land, no job, no welfare.

From 2004 to 2008, more than 10,000 hectares of land belonging to peasants in Beijing will be acquired, either by the government or enterprises. This means 120,000 to 130,000 more peasants will be facing "three-no" status.

neighbour, Liu, told the media that he heard a great noise at 3 am that day. He went out into the yard and saw dozens of guards in his neighbor's field. They took down the iron shelves and sheds in the field in a matter of minutes and land movers then drove into the field and began digging.

"I almost wanted to commit suicide after I saw what they'd done to my field," said Sun Shuxiang to the local media.

The digging was being conducted by "Summer Spending Project", an electronic project by Beijing Electronic Power Company. Just like Sun, villagers Fan Puli and Wang Guoying's fields were also dug up, and the fields of ten more villagers were slated for use in the same way.

Dai Baosheng, vice president of the company, said 3 million yuan had been paid to the village committee for compensation and to help persuade the villagers to allow their land to be used. But Sun and the other villagers said that they had been told nothing about it and had not received any money.

On April 14, under pressure from the villagers and the local media, the village committee said that villagers whose land had

been dug up would get compensation, but they didn't say when.

According to Zhang Jiaying, this kind of thing is not rare. From 2001 to 2003, among Beijing peasants who appealed to the higher authorities for help, more than one half of them were complaining about this kind of land requisition. And the numbers of lawsuits like this are rising.

Beijing Today reported last month on villagers of Zhongjiaying Village under Baishan County, Changping District suing their village committee for illegal land requisition. They said the committee contracted out local land at a suspiciously low price to a planting company, which then turned the land over to two brickkiln plants. Much of the local land has now been ruined and can no longer be cultivated.

Just as in Yangfang, the villagers of Zhongjiaying complained they had heard nothing from their village committee and had been paid none of the supposed compensation.

"We didn't know about the contract. When some of us discovered our soil was being dug

up in 2000 and reported it to the committee, they just told us the land had already been contracted out," said villager Yang Jianming.

Can't find work

"While our land is sold, we become poorer and have to make a living any way we can, sometimes by driving illegal taxis or working on construction sites," said a villager of Zhongjiaying Village to Beijing Today.

Even in cases where peasants are actually paid compensation for losing their land, employment becomes a big problem as many are unqualified for work other than farming. Governments and companies can arrange work for some peasants, but only a tiny proportion. According to Zhang, in 2001, 46% of peasants who had their land taken away were provided with some form of employment. However, in 2002, the number fell to 11%.

Finding jobs for these people is no easy task. According to the report, a county in Daxing District did not know what kind of work it could provide to suddenly landless peasants, so it was organized for them to clean streets, even though the county already had teams of street cleaners. In many factories where jobs have been arranged for

these peasants, they often become targets of discrimination and are the first to get fired if there are any layoffs.

Some peasants seek recourse to law to protect their rights. But many of them do not know or do not trust the legal solution, so they adopt other, more extreme measures.

According to Zhang Jiaying, a typical example happened in Beiwu Village, Tongzhou District in 2002. Villagers angry at having their land requisitioned organized sit-downs in main traffic arteries of the town and some of them even attacked local officials. Eight of them were arrested and sentenced to jail terms.

Some villages have tried the innovation of converting peasants' land into "shares" in the local real estate, the idea being that they can get some profit from the new uses of their land. For example, Xiaobao Village, Songzhuang Town, Tongzhou District contracted land out to manufacturing enterprises. Peasants received compensation and a bonus when the district earned money.

"But this isn't legal," said Zhang Jiaying, "since there is no law to support the use of land as stocks or shares, so the law cannot protect those peasants who engage in this. Though there are no lawsuits about it presently, if any disputes happen in the future, they will be hard to solve."

According to Zhang, there have been successful cases of arranging new lives for peasants who have lost their land, such as Caoqiao, Fengtai District, which developed furniture and flower markets to provide employment for the peasants. And areas such as Qinglong Lake, Wangzuo County, Fengtai District, have involved local peasants in the travel industry. However, these successes are rare.

Getting worse

According to the report, the area in which peasants have been losing their land has expanded from the near suburbs to further into the countryside. There's every sign that the problem is getting worse and worse.

"Along with the construction and spread of Beijing, the number of peasants who lose their land is sure to increase in the near future," said Zhang Jiaying. According to his forecast, from 2004 to 2008, more than 10,000 hectares of land belonging to peasants in Beijing will be acquired, either by the government or enterprises. This means 120,000 to 130,000 more peasants will be facing "three-no" status.

"There is no time to delay, we must begin to solve this problem as soon as possible," said Zhang. In one of his reports, he suggested that the municipal government should organize a working group specifically to tackle this problem.

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Liu demands his prize

Photos by Photocom

Lottery Fraud Exposed in Xi'an

By Sun Ming

Shaanxi Provincial Sports Bureau dismissed two top officials in lottery departments on Tuesday.

Qia Qing'an, director of Shaanxi Provincial Sports Lottery Center and Fan Hong, director of Xi'an Sports Lottery Center, were found to have been involved in a systematic fraud that was manipulating the results of the sports lottery in Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi Province.

Late last month, Yang Yongming, boss of the lottery ticket sales contractor in the city and three of his partners were also arrested. However, Sun Chenggui, Yang's assistant is still at large.

You've won...wait

Liu Liang, 17, a security guard for a company in Xi'an, will never forget the feeling when he was told that he had won a BMW car plus 120,000 yuan on March 23.

"I spent 55 yuan in buying 35 lottery scratch tickets that day. My heart beat faster when I saw the letter K on one of my lottery tickets," Liu told CCTV's *Economic Half Hour* program broadcast this Monday.

In the lottery, people whose



Yang Yongming

Jia Qing'an

Fan Hong

cards reveal the letter K have the opportunity to take part in the second round lottery. The lowest prize in the second round is a Chery QQ and top prize is a BMW car plus a

cash prize of 120,000 yuan.

In the second round, Liu won the top prize by picking out an envelope containing the top winning number from a box. Liu was proclaimed the winner and he was invited to parade with the BMW through downtown Xi'an for five hours that day.

Liu said that he wanted to drive the car away immediately, but was told that he would have to wait one day to fulfill some procedures. However, the next day when he came to the Xi'an Lottery Center to pick up his prizes, Liu was told that his lottery scratch ticket with the letter K was a fake.

"They told me that I might even have to face criminal liability for the fraud," Liu told CCTV's *Economic Half Hour* program which was broadcast on April 11.

Liu then climbed up a 13-meter billboard outside the lottery center and screamed that he would jump if he did not get his BMW. A large crowd gathered to watch. The police arrived on the scene and, along with Liu's father, managed to talk him down after one hour.

"I was really ready to jump. It's a big cheat," said Liu. "I want my BMW and the bonus. Also, I want to prove my clean reputation."

Fake ticket?

"Liu's winning ticket was a fake. This has been confirmed by the National Sports Lottery Bureau," Fan Hong, deputy director of Shaanxi Sports Lottery Center, told the media at a news conference held on April 2.

However, according to witnesses at the second round on April 23, several staff members checked Liu's lottery scratch ticket and no one noticed anything wrong with it.

Fan said that the staff members had realized that the letter K was not very clear, but they didn't pay enough attention to it. "This was our negligence. It was a rainy day. They thought it was rain water that had dampened the ticket," explained Fan.

However, Liu's family immediately responded by holding their own press conference at their home the next day and claiming the whole thing was a fraud. Liu claimed that his ticket was genuine and had been switched for the fake one which was then tested by the National Sports Lottery Bureau. "They changed my winning ticket," he said.

Liu said that he had handed over his winning ticket to a staff member who then put the ticket into his own pocket. "They didn't ask me to fill in the number of my winning ticket when I filled out the registration form," said Liu.

In CCTV's *Economic Half Hour* program broadcast on April 11, a reporter asked Fan whether the staff member should keep the winning ticket. The director of the Xi'an Sports Lottery Center said yes.

Dong Ping, the notary who proclaimed Liu the winner of the lottery on March 23, told CCTV that she hadn't seen anything wrong with Liu's ticket. "But it's not our responsibility to take care of the ticket afterwards. The cen-

ter keeps the ticket," said Dong.

On April 8, Liu brought a lawsuit against Xi'an Sports Lottery Center to Xincheng District People's Court. At the same time, Xincheng Public Security Bureau began to investigate the case.

Shady contractor

In the *Economic Half Hour* program, Yang Yongming, a private contractor for sports lottery sales, came to people's attention for the first time.

"He signed a contract with Shaanxi Provincial Sports Lottery Center in January last year to sell sports lottery tickets in Xi'an, Weinan, and Yan'an," Wang Xiaoban, a former staff member from Shaanxi Provincial Sports Lottery Center, told a reporter from CCTV in the program.

However, a regulation issued by the Ministry of Finance last year states that lottery organizations, which are all state-owned, are not permitted to entrust sales of lottery tickets to private contractors.

But Wang indicated in the program that it was common for lottery organizations to entrust the sales of lottery tickets to outside contractors.

"In order to earn more profit, contractors usually use fraudulent ways to manipulate the top prize," said Wang.

It's hard for the contractors to manipulate the sports lottery scratch tickets, because they are all printed by factories appointed by local governments. So the contractors got an idea to establish a second round draw. People can only win prizes after they succeed in the second round.

"The contractors can easily manipulate the envelopes," said Wang.

According to national lottery regulations, winners of the lottery scratch tickets should earn a prize, but the contractors use this way to defraud the winners of their prize, said Wang.

Yang denied being involved in any fraud in the *Economic Half Hour* program. "I'm a very honest person," he said.

However, after an investigation, Xi'an police arrested Yang on April 20. He was accused of manipulating the lottery in Xi'an. Yang later confessed to police that he had been involved in a fraud.

"I didn't expect that Liu would take such an extreme action," he said, according to policeman Wei Jianguo. "We made a mistake when we were changing an envelope containing the winning number. As a result, he got the top prize," said Wang.

Yang has sold 17 million sports lottery tickets, and four BMW cars have been won. By a remarkable coincidence, except the car which should belong to Liu, the other three were all won by people employed by Yang.

Yue Bing, Liu Xiaoli, and Wang Jun who were named top prize winners through Yang's scheme, were also caught by police late last month along with Yang.

Sun Chenggui, who checked Liu's winning ticket and then put it in his pocket, is still at large. Yang admitted that Sun was his assistant.

Lottery law needed

According to some staff members of Shaanxi Provincial Lottery Center, it had been an open secret for some time that Yang often cheated in the sales of sports lottery tickets. However, the provincial lottery center didn't conclude their contract with Yang; instead they increased their payment to him from 15 million yuan (US\$1.8 million) last year to 18 million (US\$2.2 million) this year.

"Currently, there is no law regulating China's lottery market. It's time to establish a lottery law to regulate the sales of lottery tickets," said Liu Ligang, a staff member from the National Sports Lottery Center.

Last year, sales of sports lottery tickets reached 20 billion yuan (US\$2.4 billion) around China.

The National Sports Lottery Center has stopped the sales of sports lottery tickets in the whole of Shaanxi Province while the investigation continues.

By Wang Fang

Around five pm on April 16, flight CA986 from San Francisco landed at Beijing Capital Airport carrying a highly important prisoner: Yu Zhendong, former president of the Bank of China, Kaiping branch. He's the first criminal suspect to be formally extradited back to China from America.

The case is being hailed as a successful example of Sino-American cooperation in law enforcement, as well as a new dawn in the battle against corruption. The handover of Yu represents more than just vital progress in arresting suspects in the \$482-million Bank of China embezzlement case; it's a sign that China has entered a new phase of international cooperation in clawing back suspects who have fled abroad.

Oops

At the beginning of October 2001, the Bank of China noticed that \$482 million had gone missing from its branch in Kaiping, a city in Guangdong.

On October 12, the bank found Xu Chaofan, Yu Zhendong and Xu Guojun, former presidents of the Kaiping branch, had all gone missing. The case was reported to the police, who soon found out that the three suspects had fled to North America with phony Hong Kong identity documents.

It gradually emerged that since the early 1990s, the three men had used their positions to embezzle money from the bank to Hong Kong, where it was ploughed into real estate, foreign currency and stocks. Money was also laundered via foreign casinos. In order to transfer money, the men designed a complex laundering procedure, transferring money to Hong Kong first and setting up companies to transfer the cash to Canada or the US. On October 15, the very day when they left Hong Kong, they transferred \$8 million to their accounts in the foreign casinos.

In planning their escape, they arranged for their wives to get American citizenship by fake marriages with American citizens. In the second half of 1997, they got single-entry visas to Hong Kong using fake names. After obtaining Hong Kong citizen identities, they applied for and received business and tourist visas from the United States Consulate in Guangzhou and the Consulate General of Canada in Hong Kong.

In November 2001, the Ministry of Public Security issued an arrest notice via the International Criminal Police Organization and froze the men's assets in Hong Kong, the US and Canada, thanks to international legal cooperation. At that time, the *Treaty Between the People's Republic*

Chinese Embezzler Nicked in US

of China and the United States on Criminal Judicial Assistance had just been signed, so Chinese police began asking their counterparts to provide assistance in investigating the suspects and the whereabouts of the money.

Cooperation between the two sides

In the 25 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the US, this is the first time a suspect has been extradited, partly because of the enormous complexity of marrying up the requirements of the two country's very different legal systems. Since Yu and his partners had been stealing money and laundering it for almost 10 years, it was difficult to compile sufficient evidence to even arrest them. In addition, the suspects committed their crimes in China, Hong Kong, the US and Canada, requiring the evidence collected by the police to be connected in a complete and precise chain.

Chen Dong, deputy head of the Serious Criminal Cases Investigation Center in the Anti-Corruption Bureau of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, talked about how the evidence was collected in the CCTV program *People in the News* on May 11, 2004.

He said Chinese departments were responsible for collecting evidence of the money transferring procedures and destination, and their American counterparts investigated the suspects and their relatives' financial circumstances and collected evidence of racketeering and illegal immigration. In this way, Chinese police worked out the solutions that the suspects had probably thought of and American police identified how the money was being used.

Since the evidence collection in the mainland had to serve as the basis for the overseas arrest, the material evidence collected by the police was so extensive that it had to be stacked in several rooms. For example, Hong Kong police once put forward more than 100 questions which had to be supported by the evidence and Chinese police finished the mission within one month, proving that the suspects had indeed used Hong Kong as the springboard for their crime.

"This case is extremely complex. For example, the American court accused Yu of money laundering. If Yu had provided evidence that the properties he owned in America were not bought by using money he stole from China, and if Chinese police had not been able to provide plausible evidence to support our American counterparts' case, the whole prosecution would have gone in another legal direction under American



Welcome home

practice", said Gao Feng, vice director of the Economic Crime Reconnaissance Department of the Ministry of Public Security.

"Due to the different legal systems, the evidence which our Chinese counterparts can use may not be adopted by us and vice versa," Liu Weilian, legal specialist in the Beijing Office of the FBI also pointed out.

Yu was arrested in December 2002 in Los Angeles and charged with racketeering. His two colleagues are still at large. In September 2003, American police returned \$3.55 million stolen by Yu to Chinese police.

Yu's conviction

As relations between China and the US have grown warmer, signs of more determined cooperation have emerged. US President George Bush recently ordered immigration authorities to bar any public official suspected of corruption in China.

Yu admitted that even having escaped with such a huge fortune, life was not easy. He had few illusions about his new life, he told CCTV in the program *Fa Zhi Zai Xian*. "People like us who committed a crime and escaped to the States always felt that there was something heavy in our hearts. I felt that I could be arrested at any time after the case was disclosed. It seemed that I had freedom to go out but I couldn't sleep well. I even found myself killing time by watching TV."

Yu spent 30 months in the US and half of that time he was in prison. Gao described his first meeting with Yu in America. "He told me that he was not used to the life and food in the prison

and some of the prisoners even abused him physically and verbally. He was desperate and did not know whether he should stay in the American prison or sign the plea agreement to be prosecuted in China."

At first, Yu did not sign the plea agreement because he still had some doubts, which led to a second meeting with Gao. Yu told CCTV how he felt at that time. "If I didn't cooperate with Chinese police, I would not get any leniency. If I could help the investigation I knew there was still a chance of a lighter sentence."

The significance of Yu's handover

Yu's plea agreement required US authorities to obtain assurances that China would not sentence him to more than 12 years and that "he will not be tortured or put to death", according to the American embassy statement quoted by the Associated Press.

However, many people in China do not understand this arrangement. According to current legal practice in China, embezzlement suspects in far more minor cases are frequently sentenced to death. So why should Yu escape the death penalty?

"The arrest helps us investigate the whole case," Gao pointed out. "It also scares the other suspects." He believes that this sense of the judicial net tightening internationally might put people off embezzling money.

In any case, according to Chen Dong, "the 12-year imprisonment is an agreement we will take into account. But the final judgment will be made by the court according to our law."

By Li Sha

Turning to the economically uncertain life of an artist may seem a strange decision, particularly if it involves throwing in a thriving fashion design business. But Yan Yaya is a woman with a mission. Ever since she first visited the Pamirs, a mountainous region which stretches from the borders of China to Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Kashmir, Yan has had a desire to show the world the beauty of the place and the hard lives of its people in her paintings. "I depict their happiness, short and fleeting, and their sorrow, brought about by poverty," she says.

The transition from business woman to painter was not easy, but her solo exhibition, named *Angels of Warmth* and held in the National Art Museum of China in December last year, was a success. Her paintings are oil on canvas and focus on the children of the Pamirs. The children are depicted in their natural simplicity and sincerity. Although their lives in the Pamirs may be tough, they still feel pleased and happy to grow up there. It seems Yan's work has struck a chord, both with visitors to the exhibition and critics, who have described her as a young artist at the height of her creative powers.

Harbor of her soul

Yan visited Xinjiang for the first time in the summer of 1984 when she was still a sophomore of Gansu Northwest Nationality Institute's faculty of fine arts. The diverse ethnic minorities of the Pamirs, as well as the colors of its sky and awesome mountains, all left an indelible impression on her.

"Those natural colors have a strong, lively vigor, and the light is always changing," she says. Since that first visit, she has regarded the Pamirs as the basis for her artistic inspiration. She began to visit the region on a regular basis.

In order to better understand the people she wanted to portray, Yan had to overcome fears of hardship and adversity. Her travels, which took her across the vast Gobi desert nine times, were not without incident and the odd perilous situation. But it was worth it in the search for creative inspiration for her paintings.

She found the people of the Pamirs especially interesting. Many of the ethnic minorities living there have had to endure great hardship in struggling for survival. Yan saw in them a kind of existential nobility, unsullied by modern materialism.

She also developed a deep love towards the children there, whom she thought encapsulated this purity. "I fell in love with them," she says. Now, on her annual trips, she brings gifts when she visits the local people. She wanted to live among the people and experience the same hardships, to get to know their sorrow and happiness. Although life was tough, she still felt happy there, as it's the only place that could satisfy her creative thirst.

Fashion darling

Yan was born in the ancient city of Xi'an and studied painting from the age of six. One day when she visited China's National Museum of Fine Arts at the age of 18, she was deeply moved by an exhibition of oil paintings in the museum and she swore that one day her own paintings would be up on display.

However, for the time being this was just a dream. Real life was plain and simple. After graduating from Gansu Northwest Nationality Institute, she worked in a local museum doing simple jobs that had little to do with her major. She still kept practicing painting every day. But she wasn't satisfied with her job and wanted to do more.

One of her home experiments was in making some dyed clothes. Her friends were greatly impressed and they persuaded her to start her own fashion business. She went ahead with



Yan Yaya with some of the children of the Pamirs

Taking the High Road

After several of these frightening experiences, Yan found herself vowing never to make any more trips. But her love for the Pamirs and the children always prevailed over her fears and the obstacles, so she kept returning.



Little Tsasce (Oil on Canvas)



Gulandanmm, Tajik Girl (Oil on Canvas).

the plan and it became an unexpected success. Her products soon became fashionable among the local girls in Lanzhou and Yan's clothes were often sold out within hours of going on sale. Her self-made products became more and more popular so she established her own fashion company and organized her own team of models.

Yan and her models made quite a splash at the Dalian International Fashion Festival in 1988, drawing attention from a lot of industry insiders. Then she won a prize at the Chinese Folk Custom Exhibition in America. Her success was bringing her wealth and reputation. She was able to buy her own car and house and lead a comfortable life.

But she found this sweet taste of success was a transient pleasure and felt she had almost forgotten something hidden deeply in her heart for many years. That was her love for painting. Although she still painted, she yearned to devote all her time to the art. This desire took her to Beijing, where she decided to focus on her long-cherished dream.

She started on a graduate course in oil painting at China's Central Art Institute and sold off all her private property including two fashion stores. She disbanded her team of models and devoted all her resources to her new life.

Sacrifices

Life as a student in Beijing was not easy. Yan found herself burning through her savings fast, partly as she had to buy expensive items like high-quality paint brushes and paints. She also wanted to visit all the best art shows and museums. In order to save her dwindling resources and have a quiet private studio for painting, she rented a basement in a residential building at Huajia.

One summer night while she was sleeping, a heavy downpour flooded the basement and soaked all her paintings. When she woke up she found her studio had become a pool. She herself had been sleeping in it for a while without realizing. Partly as a result, she now suffers from arthritis.

But Yan's dedication to painting was not shaken. She often kept working for several consecutive days. She became so immersed in her work that she even forgot to eat and didn't get too much sleep. She ate simple food and thought only about painting.

The ultimate escape from life in a basement still beckoned, however, so Yan kept heading out on trips to the wide open spaces of the Pamirs, even if it wasn't necessarily a relaxing experience.

One time when she was on her way to the Pamirs by truck, a sudden mud-slide rushed down the hill towards them. It soon covered the road and the truck. They climbed out and had to lie on a dry log waiting for rescue for all night long.

Another time on her way to the Pamirs, the car she took broke when they reached the Gobi plateau. The driver had to head off to seek help from miles away and in the meantime, Yan and her companions waited by the car. The night was freezing, well below zero, and Yan soon heard the howling of packs of wolves. She and her companions had to rely on burning firewood to keep warm as well as to keep the wolves away. Yan didn't dare to sleep the whole night as she could see the eyes of the wolves shining like beams of green light not far from the fire.

Indeed, after several of these frightening experiences, Yan found herself vowing never to make any more trips. But her love for the Pamirs and the children always prevailed over her fears and the obstacles, so she kept returning.

Recognition

Yan established her name as a painter after her works were shown at the fourth session of the International Art Exposition of China in December 2002. Eight of her eleven paintings were sold at the show and she became the star of the exposition. Afterwards she signed a contract with the Hakaren Art Gallery in Singapore to become one of its house painters. Yan has also been invited to give lectures and have her works shown overseas. She has become so popular in overseas art circles that her works have been collected by art galleries in America, Japan and Canada.

The exhibition at the National Art Museum of China also turned out to be a great success. CCTV devoted a special program to Yan, sending a team to accompany her on another trip to the Pamirs to search for the source of her creative inspiration.

Despite these honors, Yan still leads an ordinary life as before. She paints furiously for more than ten hours each day, still eats simple food and still confines herself to her studio and the world she creates in her paintings.



Wedding Brunch (Oil on Canvas)

Photos provided by Yan Yaya

By Sheng Mingming

A three-year campaign to preserve China's ethnic folk songs concluded in Beijing last month, with a press conference billed as Fruits of Chinese Ethnic Folk Song Preservation.

The campaign, launched in early 2001, was part of a project titled Preserving the Intangible Cultural Heritage of China's Ethnic Minority Groups launched in December 2000. Organized by the Chinese Folk Artists' Association, under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and UNESCO, the campaign has made significant progress in safeguarding this ethnic minority folk tradition.

Over the past three years, musicians and folklore specialists from the Chinese Folk Artists Association and Chinese Academy of Social Sciences have been working ardously in the remote ethnic minority villages in southwest China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and northwest China's Gansu and Qinghai provinces.

Liu Chunxiang, leader of the research team and vice chairman of the Chinese Folk Artists' Association told *Beijing Today* that, based on research and advanced methods of audio-visual documentation, their work has yielded satisfactory fruit, including the transliteration of 385 recorded folk songs, 57 hours of filming, 42 hours of field recordings, transcriptions of the complete lyrics of all of the songs, a full-color brochure aimed at young Chinese readers interested in China's cultural heritage and a 45-minute CD-ROM overview, as well as increased international cooperation, and heightened awareness in the media and among the public.

All the lyrics are printed in Chinese, English and the original languages, with transcriptions in the International Phonetic Alphabet.

"The initial work has succeeded in presenting living musical traditions as a social act between performers and audience," said Yasuyuki Aoshima, director of the UNESCO office in Beijing. "In addition, it serves as an invaluable example for our society in terms of international cooperation and as a source of inspiration for further work."

Three year's hard work

"It has really been hard work," Liu said. Carrying heavy notebooks and re-

cording equipment, the researchers traveled over 20,000 kilometers to isolated villages in precipitous mountains, across deep deserts, to corners of the most remote inhabited areas, to look for, interview, and record folk singers.

They recorded the lyrics and expressions of ethnic folk songs in three stages: investigation, recording and transcription.

In 2001, the team traveled around Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Gansu and Qinghai provinces, to investigate and select the pilot cities and counties; then from March 2002 to early 2003, they traveled twice into the selected areas to record and undertake complementary investigation. They recorded 235 traditional folk singers from 10 different ethnic minority groups, such as the Dong, Yao, Zhuang, Tu, Salar, Yugur, Baoan, Dongxiang, Tibetan and Hui ethnic minorities.

Liu Chunxiang told *Beijing Today* that, to best preserve the authenticity of the materials, they made close-ups in field recordings and recorded and shot the singers with no montage when the singers were singing.

In this way, the lively and valuable materials not only retain the original flavor of the singing, but also help to give a vivid sense of the feeling and emotion each folk song embodies, as well as that of the singer.

Brink of extinction

The traditional folk songs of China's diverse ethnic minority groups, passed down from generation to generation, are not only rich and colorful art works, but also important historical documents. But the researchers found that seemingly every minute, ethnic folk songs are disappearing, like any other intangible cultural heritages.

"Some ethnic groups have their own particular language but without written words. If nothing is done to salvage it, their languages and their oral arts will soon become extinct," said Liu Xiaochun, a researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

One example is the *dage* of the Dong ethnic group, a unique style of chorus with a multi-part complex form. It caused a sensation around the world when it was "discovered" last century, but now few Dong people can sing it.

Liu Chunxiang said that



Children of the Dong ethnic minority in Congjiang, Guizhou, join in a multi-harmony song at the Dage Festival in November last year.

Photos by Photocom

Salvaging China's Ethnic Folk Songs

The traditional folk songs of China's diverse ethnic minority groups, passed down from generation to generation, are not only rich and colorful art works, but also important historical documents.



The disappearance of folk songs, along with other folk arts, is a result of modernization and globalization, which, the researchers say, has changed the living style of ethnic minority groups.

now, most ethnic folk singers are middle aged or elderly. Few people under 50 can sing the folk songs of their ethnic groups. Among the 67 Guangxi singers they recorded, 36 are over 50 years old, accounting for 70 percent; and in Bagen Village, no one under 20 can sing the folk songs.

Zhao Xiaoyi from the Sichuan Musicians' Association, said there are now only eight people in the province who can sing melodies from the Nanping folk songs, a famous local music in Jiuzhaigou; fewer than 10 can play the *qiang* flute; and only four can sing the multi-part choruses of the Qiang ethnic group, of whom the youngest is in his fifties.

Liu Chunxiang told *Beijing Today* the story of the Yugur singer Tuo Yueyu, who died just days before the second visit of the research team. On her deathbed, Tuo asked her daughter why the team had not yet arrived.

Guardian of folk arts

The disappearance of folk songs, along with other folk arts, is a result of modernization and globalization, which, the researchers say, has changed the living style of ethnic minority groups. Worryingly, there are limited channels to pass on these skills.

To try to salvage and pre-

serve the threatened ethnic cultures, a nationwide heritage rescue program was launched by the Ministry of Culture last February, and the National Center of the Chinese Ethnic and Folk Culture Preservation Project was subsequently established.

Zhou Heping, vice minister of culture, told *Beijing Today* that in 2002 and 2003, the government has spent a special fund of 6 million yuan for the start-up and investigation work of the preservation project, and this year another 20 million yuan has been allocated.

Long way to go

Liu Chunxiang told *Beijing Today* that their work has just started, as they have only covered 10 of the 55 ethnic minority groups in China. They are planning next to record minority folk songs in southwest China's Sichuan and Guizhou provinces, and if possible they will also travel to Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang and Tibet autonomous regions and to Yunnan Province.

The research team will go back to the areas of their fieldwork in April to deliver the CD-ROMs and anthologies of folk songs to the local primary and middle schools, in an effort to help foster the inheritance and development of traditional culture.

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Celtic Pride

Treasures of the Irish Museum Of Modern Art come to the capital

By Yu Shanshan

Green grass, U2, potatoes and fine stout are among the first things likely to spring to mind upon mention of Ireland. A new show in town for the next several days hopes to override these common stereotypes in the minds of Beijingers with an appreciation of the island's rich heritage and present developments in the realm of art.

The venue for the exhibition, involving pieces from the Irish Museum of Modern Art and running until May 22, is the China Millennium Monument Museum. The event opened on April 30 and is divided into two sections, one entitled Representing the Tain, and the other dubbed Views from an Island.

The focus of the first part is heritage, albeit through modern interpretations. On show are 20 tapestries by painter Louis le Brocquy and three bronze bulls forged by sculptor John Behan, all of which were made in the 1960s and 70s and were inspired by the *Tain Bo Culainge* (*The Brown Bull of Cooley*), a tale of a battle fought by the mythic Celtic hero Cuchulainn against a feared brown bull.

"The history of Ireland was predominantly rural until the middle of the 19th century, so it is not surprising then that the most powerful folk tales and legends that animate Irish life relate to rural culture. The challenge facing contemporary artists is to find ways to represent the superheroes of that lifestyle in the modern world. Both the painter Louis le Brocquy and the sculpture John Behan have responded to this demand by making artwork that restates the importance of that heritage for contemporary Ireland," reads the show's introduction.

Views from an Island is a group show featuring recent works from



Willie Doherty, Longing/Lamenting, 1987, color photographs with text (2 panels), 76x102cm

23 contemporary Irish artists who portray different facets of modern Ireland through paintings, sculpture, photographs, video and installations.

The country's economy has gone from stagnant to booming in the past decade, fueling the urbanization and diversification of the Irish population. Yet traditional ties to the land remain strong, leading several artists to work towards reconciling their nation's rural heritage with modern conditions. Many other pieces address similar themes of the place of the country's history and tradition in the realities of present day life.

Land

The impact of land and rural life on Irish identity has long been a major theme in the country's art. Among the pieces in the show that addresses such topics, Kathy Prendergast's works are the most intriguing. In her *Body Map* series, landscapes smoothly meld with images of the female body. Also included in the event are 30 pieces from her *The City Drawings* series, which won awards at the 1995 Venice Biennale.

"Organic and web-like in appearance, these pencil-drawn maps suggest a tighter link be-

tween nature and culture than is usually allowed, while the presentation of each one on a similarly sized sheet of paper imposes a democratic overview of the global economic and political landscape," writes Catherine Marshall, curator of this exhibition and head of collections at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, in the preface to the show.

Trouble and strife

Ireland's turbulent and tragic history holds a position of similar if not greater importance in the mind of many artists, such as Alanna O'Kelly. In her DVD projected installation *Sanctuary/*

Wasteland, images of victims of the country's great famine are superimposed against a backdrop of a rocky mound. To expand the focus beyond Ireland's borders, the piece also involves the broadcast of sounds from other parts of the world where famine still occurs.

Willie Doherty is among the artists that address 'the troubles,' the ongoing conflict in Northern Ireland, in her case through photographs of a burned car on the side of a country road called *Incident and Border Incident*.

The Blood of the Beast, cibachrome photographs by Nigel Rolfe shows three hands, all symbols of differing aspects of Irish culture mixed up in the conflict. The bloody red hand is the traditional symbol of Ulster, a flash-point of violence in Northern Ireland. Another hand playing a *bodhrán* (an Irish drum) could be mistaken for a gun, while the third hand is crushing a lily, a potent symbol of the squashing of peace.

Satire

The Irish's celebrated satirical sense gets represented in two works in etched painted steel by Belfast artist John Kindness, *Scraping the Surface* and *Dulce et Decorum est....* "By creating irreverent parodies of Greek vase painting on discarded fragments of a New York taxicab, Kindness forces us to think again about the kind of culture our excavated residues will reveal in time to come," Marshall writes in her preface.

Isabel Nolan extends her satirical gaze beyond Ireland's borders to skewer the marketing of commodities in today's world, particularly brand names and slogans. In her comical and thought-provoking piece *Sloganeering 1-4*, a combination of performance and video, she shreds one slogan after another to reveal the emptiness at the center of global enterprise.

Gender

Witty approaches to art itself can be seen in a number of "gender" works, such as those of Dorothy Cross. Cross's video *Teacup* uses a clip from Robert O'Flaherty's 1930s film *The Man of Aran* which shows fishermen rowing a small boat over stormy Atlantic waves, projected from the inside of a teacup.

Similar dualities are present in Cross's installation *Saddle*, a common saddle put atop a 118-centimeter-tall metal stand with part of a cow udder glued to its surface.

"Here Cross uses a found object, and gives it a new look to comment yet again on the complementary nature of male and female, all the sharper for her awareness of the slang use of the word 'ride' to mean sexual intercourse," Marshall notes.



Nigel Rolfe, Blood of the Beast (the bloody right hand), 1990, cibachrome photographs, 150x100cm



Kathy Prendergast, from her Body Maps series, 1983, mixed media on paper



Willie Doherty, Border Incident, 1994, cibachrome on aluminium, 123x184cm



John Kindness, Scraping the Surface, 1990, etched painted steel (New York taxi door), 112.5x87.5cm

Eilis O'Connell's totem-like sculpture *Laden*, with its archetypal organic and womblike references, is a more primitive symbol of gender.

The exhibition is one of several Ireland-related shows in the capital these days, including the Gate Theatre's performances of *Waiting for Godot* this weekend, as part of the annual Meet in Beijing event.

Where: Art Museum of the China Millennium Monument

When: through May 22, Mon-Thu 8 am-6 pm; Fri-Sun 8 am-9 pm.

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What's on DVD

By Tom Spearman



In America

Director Jim Sheridan is probably best known for Irish epics like *The Field*, *My Left Foot* and *In the Name of the Father*. Probably his most personal film to date, *In America* is a largely autobiographical tale of the hard life of an immigrant Irish actor and his family arriving in New York. Nominated for three Oscars, critics also raved about the performance of Samantha Morton. **DVD 9**



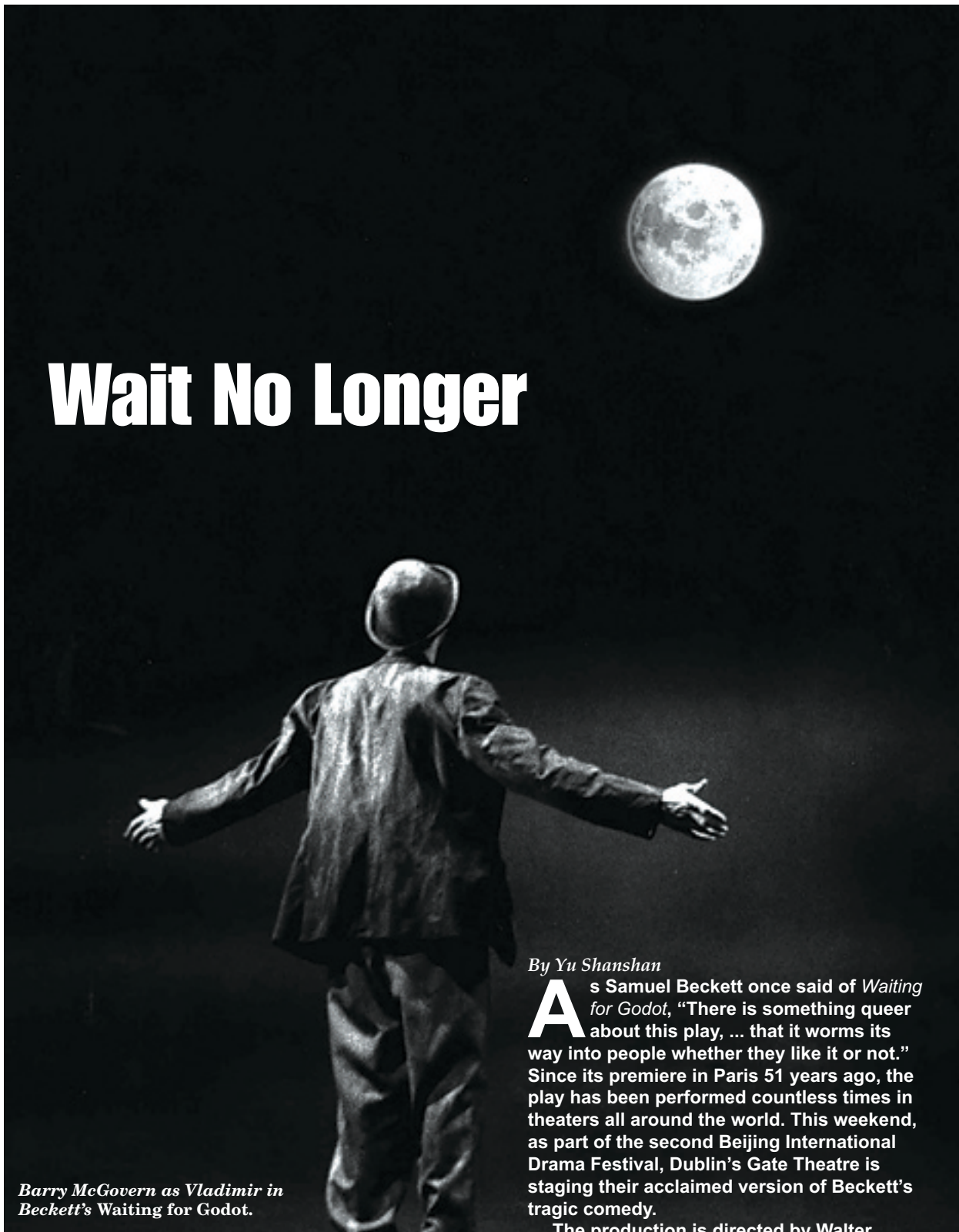
The Fog of War

A promising sign in the Beijing DVD market is the emergence of some of the best documentary features of recent years, such as *One Day in September*. Now available is this year's documentary Oscar winner, *The Fog of War*, which examines the Vietnam War via a candid portrait of Robert MacNamara, Secretary of Defense for JFK and Lyndon Johnson. **DVD 9**



Death in Venice

This lush character study is one of Italian master Luchino Visconti's most famous films, following the artistic and emotional struggles of a composer holidaying in Venice. Adapted, some would argue hamfistedly, from a story by Thomas Mann, this is an unforgettable film experience for anyone who manages to stay awake for the duration. **DVD 9**



Wait No Longer

Barry McGovern as Vladimir in Beckett's Waiting for Godot.

By Yu Shanshan

As Samuel Beckett once said of *Waiting for Godot*, "There is something queer about this play, ... that it worms its way into people whether they like it or not." Since its premiere in Paris 51 years ago, the play has been performed countless times in theaters all around the world. This weekend, as part of the second Beijing International Drama Festival, Dublin's Gate Theatre is staging their acclaimed version of Beckett's tragic comedy.

The production is directed by Walter Asmus, who worked with Beckett from the time the two met in Berlin in 1974. Since then, Asmus has directed all of Beckett's plays internationally.

For a play in which, famously, nothing really happens, *Waiting For Godot* continues to captivate and confound audiences. The story, such as it is, centers on the down-at-heel Vladimir and Estragon and their futile wait for Mr. Godot, a figure so obscure that they can't even remember why they started waiting for him in the first place. As they observe though, at least waiting for Godot passes the time – passing time, as Beckett may be telling us, being all that life really amounts to.

Designed by Louis le Brocqy, a renowned Irish painter whose works are currently on shown at the China Millennium Museum, the Gate's minimalist *Waiting for Godot* should not be missed.

Where: Beijing People's Art Theatre, Wangfujing
When: till Saturday
Tickets: 280, 180, 120, 60 yuan
Tel: 6524 9847

Soul Beyond the Body

By Wang Yao

Zhang Qianqian's only album to date was released three years ago. *Linghun Chuqiao* (*Soul Beyond the Body*) employs rock, electronics, folk and even classical styles, demonstrating her deep understanding of music. Her singing style moves from soft crooning to occasional volcanic eruptions.

Flame is a soft, electronic sounding song, while *Another Emotion* is accompanied by exquisite violin. The title song *Soul Beyond the Body* and *Ramble* have a refined, somewhat hypnotic feel.

Zhang's frank attitude to her music and her masterful style have won her numerous fans. She says all her music has been deeply influenced by both classical music and rock, and paints her music with a little bit of mystery and a little bit of poetry.



WORLDWIDE



Friends

Friends Split Up after Decade Long Run

The cast of the hit comedy series *Friends* went their separate ways last week, leaving a huge army of fans with a gap in their Thursday night television viewing that networks admit will be hard to fill. The ending was the topic of days of speculation on television and radio stations before the show. "*Friends* has been one of the cornerstones of the network for the last 10 years," said Jeff Zucker, NBC president, "Obviously we can't deny it is a huge loss for us." (AFP)



Naomi Campbell

Supermodel Wins Privacy Fight with Tabloid

Supermodel Naomi Campbell won a long-running legal battle when Britain's highest court ruled that she was indeed the victim of invasion of privacy by a popular tabloid newspaper. The case involved a February 2001 report in the *Daily Mirror* about Campbell's addiction to drugs, which included a photo of her leaving a Narcotics Anonymous meeting in Chelsea, west London. The *Daily Mirror* maintained that its reporting was in the public interest, and the Court of Appeal agreed. But on Thursday, the Law Lords found the High Court was right, and that the *Daily Mirror* had violated Campbell's right to privacy. (AFP)



Giorgio Armani

Armani Opens Rome Retrospective

Giorgio Armani, the Milanese designer who took the fashion crowd by storm some 30 years ago when he turned

the simple suit into a fashion icon, is now intent on conquering Rome. For the first time, the city is opening one of its ancient venues, the recently restored Baths of Diocletian, to a fashion exhibit. The show is the Armani Retrospective collection, which leads the viewer through rooms with marble columns and remnants of pagan temples on a path of discovery of Armani style. (AP)

Unknown Wins Coveted Harry Potter Role

Unknown actress Katie Leung has beaten thousands of young oriental actresses to play the part of Harry Potter's first girlfriend in the film *Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire*. Scottish-born Leung, 16, was picked from more than 4,000 applicants for the role of Cho Chang – the Chinese girl who wins the heart of the boy wizard. A movie insider says, "The film producers and author J. K. Rowling were keen to get a complete unknown for the part of Cho Chang and Katie's absolutely perfect. She's pretty, bright and one can see why Harry would have a crush on her. She has a glittering career ahead of her." (IMDB)

Hollywood Pushing for Stem Cell Research

Celebrities including Nancy Reagan, Dustin Hoffman, Michael J. Fox and Larry King raised \$2 million for stem-cell research Saturday night in Beverly Hills, California, at a gala for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. The money is part of nearly \$20 million that the foundation is donating to advance stem-cell research. Stem cells are the body's building blocks and have the potential to become many different types of cells. Scientists believe the cells can be coaxed into specific cells to repair organs or treat diseases such as diabetes, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. "People from Hollywood have always supported this," said Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation chief executive Peter Van Etten. (AP)



Michael J. Fox and Nancy Reagan

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Skeletal lovers T-shirt at Cowboys Dallas, 460 yuan

Tastes of Farther East Asia

While products of Japanese and South Korean cultures may baffle consumers in many countries, they have found a welcome market in China, particularly among the younger generation. Movies, soap operas, cartoons and music from the two countries are wildly popular among the capital's youth, as are clothes, cosmetics, toys and household wares brought in or

inspired by China's neighbors.

Love of South Korean pop stars and Japanese animators fuels the popularity of the countries' crazier styles, but many more mature Beijingers like Japanese and South Korean clothes brands for their strong price-to-quality quotients that make them very competitive with high-priced European and American brands.

Outlet of Asian Fashions

By Zhou Ying

Local Korea-culture maniacs have a new place to shop since the opening of the Beijing outlet of Singapore-based shopping center 77th Street Plaza at Xidan Culture Plaza on April 3. The shopping center already houses three stores dedicated to goods imported from South Korea and more are likely on the way.

The Fair specializes in South Korean shoes for women. Fashion elitists will appreciate the shop owner's vow that no more than 10 pairs of each style of shoe is made in order to protect their uniqueness. Yet prices are reasonable, just 300 yuan to 500 yuan per pair, and now even lower in a big sale running through the end of June. (Tel: 6603 2417)

Across the corridor is the **San J Jewelry** store, filled with more than 3,000 kinds of sparkling jewels brought in from the neighbor to the north. Popular items include hundreds of designs of earrings in 14 karat gold and zircon, regularly priced at 300 yuan to 500 yuan and now offered at 50 percent off through the end of the month. The store can also have all kinds of pieces made specifically to customers' orders. (Tel: 6471 4224)

Not far away stands the unlikely-named **Cowboys Dallas**, a store filled with T-shirts and jeans of South Korean make. The shop owner personally chooses his stock from studies of South Korean and Japanese fashion magazines and says the jeans, generally priced at 300 yuan and up, have proven very popular with students. The funky T-shirts come in a range of



styles and prices, most falling between 80 yuan and 150 yuan. Cowboys Dallas is also running significant discounts that should extend well into the future. (Tel: 1330 1060 760)

Where: Xidan Culture Plaza, B3-C12, North Xidan Avenue No.180, Xicheng **Open:** 10 am -10 pm



South Korean shoes, 298 yuan

Goodbye, Hello Kitty

By Chen Si

Strolling down Longfusi near the National Gallery of Arts, it's hard to miss the shop Bobopeng thanks to its colorful storefront and bright orange walls.

The store is a specialist in imported items bearing impressions of South Korean cartoons and divided into three sections, one devoted to notebooks, one to small cards and the rest to small daily use articles.

The star of the store is "Ineco", a beloved South Korean cartoon cat that appears on many products. Others carry pictures of young boys and girls, but all share a tendency towards bright, pastel colors, leaving the store awash in pink and light blue.

Some notebooks are then spruced up with reflective gold powder to add to their appeal. Yet prices are not high, ranging from 8 yuan to 25 yuan depending on size.

The tiny cards contain birthday wishes and other greetings and most hold surprises only revealed once unfolded into three-dimensional



Fun fold-out South Korean card, 2.8 yuan

glory. Some are decorated with small leaves for a natural vibe and all are priced at just around 3 yuan each.

The mini-treatment is also evident in a travel tooth care set (18 yuan) that consists of a tiny toothbrush and matching tube of toothpaste in one little container topped with a mirror and bearing a picture of a cute kitty.

Even cuter is "Letter in the Bottle" (10 yuan), a small ream of letter paper rolled and protected inside a small glass, test tube-like container. The quaint package is tied closed with a golden thread bearing a clear star at one end, while the paper is gussied up with bright, pretty colors.

Where: No. 117 Longfusi pedestrian street, Chaoyang **Open:** 9:30 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6401 9772



Cross pendant, 398 yuan

Semi-exotic Silver

By Jiang Yongzhu

Tucked among the many fun stores in the Xijiekou area is B.J.T, which offers silver jewelry and accessories imported from Japan. The pieces are all handmade, yet remarkable as much for their low prices as for their craftsmanship and delicacy.

Crosses and feather motifs show up in many goods, from necklaces and bracelets to earrings. One cross pendant, priced at 398 yuan, stands out with its arabesque-like carvings and deep blue stone embedded at its center. The unusual piece combines Japanese aesthetics with a Middle Ages feel.

A silver feather pendant (68 yuan) just two centimeters long has a more purely Japanese touch. As light as a feather, it has a polished piece of turquoise at one end to add color.

B.J.T stocks plenty of items aimed squarely at sweethearts, especially rings and necklaces. One statement of possessive love is a necklace with a lock to hang on a lover's neck while keeping the key to oneself (168 yuan). A classier choice may be two feather-shaped pieces that form a heart when put together (158 yuan).

Store owner Wang Lei takes particular pride in his collection of rings and has even given names to each one. They come bearing simple stones or shaped in animal designs or stronger images such as a death heads. Prices range from 100 yuan to 800 yuan.

Where: No. 108 Xijiekou Beidajie, Xicheng **Open:** 9:30 am - 9:30 pm **Tel:** 6616 1649

Korean White-collar Clothes

By Chen Si

Baggy pants and other street styles are out and more sophisticated South Korean fashions are in these days in Beijing. Of course, more elegance often equates to more cost. But at Style, a shop hidden inside the second floor of the Scientific and Technological Convention and Exhibition Center near the northwest corner of the Third Ring Road, genuine South Korean professional fashions can be had for prices accessible to regular white-collar workers.

Most of the clothes for sale come in dark colors, from deep red to black, to emphasize their formality. Besides their careful shading, many

South Korean garments for women are tapered at the waist for extra figure enhancement. One example, displayed in a storefront window, is a black suit with grey vertical stripes (980 yuan) that has a low neckline and an attractive, triangular look.

Dressing for success does not necessarily mean dressing formally. Just as good for more relaxed days in a high-charged office is a red jacket (380 yuan) that curves out at its ends. A big gold star for a button adds a touch of fun.

Red is also the chosen color of a comfortable, very presentable skirt made of artificial fiber with a thick lining. It is appropriate for evenings

out and formal work occasions, and its superior quality fetches a higher price of 1,800 yuan.

Many of the pants on offer are cut at unusual lengths, about a tenth shorter than average women's slacks. The missing centimeters improve comfort and add style. The shop also stocks an attractive range of shoes, hats, scarves and other accessories to properly round out the Korean-style professional outfits.

Where: FB15, Scientific and Technological Convention and Exhibition Center (Keji Huizhan Zhongxin), Haidian

Open: 9:30 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6216 1657

Photos by Li Shuzhuan



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Celluloid Feasts

By Joel Kirkhart and Lu Pinrou

Food and film can be great combination, not only as the familiar date formula of dinner and a movie, but also through films that actually focus on food. Below are four favorites food-filled flicks, as well as a couple recipes for creating movie-inspired delicacies at home.

The unlikely heroes of *The Chinese Feast* are an injured restaurant owner, his defiant daughter, a disgraced master chef and a reformed loan shark-cum-dishwasher.



The Chinese Feast (Manhan Quanxi)

Directed by Tsui Hark, starring Leslie Cheung, Anita Yuen, Kenny Bee, Zhao Wen Zhuo, Chiu Man Chuk, and Law Ka Ying.

A manic mix of genres that could only have come from Hong Kong (and Tsui Hark), this flick combines slapstick, romance, gangsters, karaoke, inflatable sex dolls, monkey brains and kung fu-inspired cooking into a bizarre stew that somehow really works. The convoluted plot drags in places, and all but defies description, but gets amusingly gripping during the cooking finale.

In the wringer ending, a competition to cook the elaborate and exotic traditional banquet called *Manhan Quanxi*, the four unlikely heroes square off against the devious Master Wong, an ambitious chef out to corner the city's high-end dining market.

In the first of the competition's three rounds, Master Wong cooks up the movie's strangest dish with his "Snowy White Bear Palm," a whole bear palm that is stewed, punctured, filled with nitrogen, pressure cooked in sturgeon soup, flash frozen and finally served liberally topped with caviar. That is the kind of food offered in *The Chinese Feast*, bizarre, over-the-top and generally more entertaining than actually appetizing.

Arguably the best cooking scene comes during an earlier, less formal culinary showdown, from which Wong's flambéed take on *ganchao niuhe*, or beef chow fun noodles, is the only dish in the whole movie likely to whet viewers' appetites and possible to make with ease at home. Just don't expect it to come out like Kit's version – such food is only the stuff of movies.

Recipe:

Beef chow fun (Ganchao niuhe)

4 cups mung bean sprouts, thoroughly rinsed
500 grams flank steak or other thin cut of marbled beef
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1 tablespoon thin soy sauce
1 1/2 teaspoons cornstarch
1 1/2 teaspoons Shaoxing rice wine
1 tablespoon dried fermented black beans (*douchi*)
500 grams fresh broad rice noodles (*hefen*)
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
3 slices ginger
3 cloves ginger, minced
2 scallions, cut into two-centimeter lengths
2 tablespoons oyster sauce

Slice the beef into thin strips, place in a bowl, add baking soda and stir to combine. Add the soy sauce, cornstarch and rice wine and mix.
Rinse the black beans, then

mash. If not pre-cut, slice the noodles crosswise into centimeter-wide strips.

Heat a wok or sautee pan until hot but not smoking, add one tablespoon oil, then the ginger and garlic and stir-fry about 15 seconds until fragrant. Add the beef, spreading it then leaving it to cook undisturbed for around one minute, allowing it to start to brown. Add the black beans and then stir-fry the meat another one to two minutes until beef is browned but still a bit rare. Transfer to a plate and wash wok. Heat wok over heat again, then add the remaining oil and the noodles. Spread them and cook one minute without stirring until just crusty. Add the bean sprouts and continue cooking one minute. Then put the beef back in the wok along with the spring onion and oyster sauce and stir-fry together with noodles for around two minutes until well combined. Serve immediately.

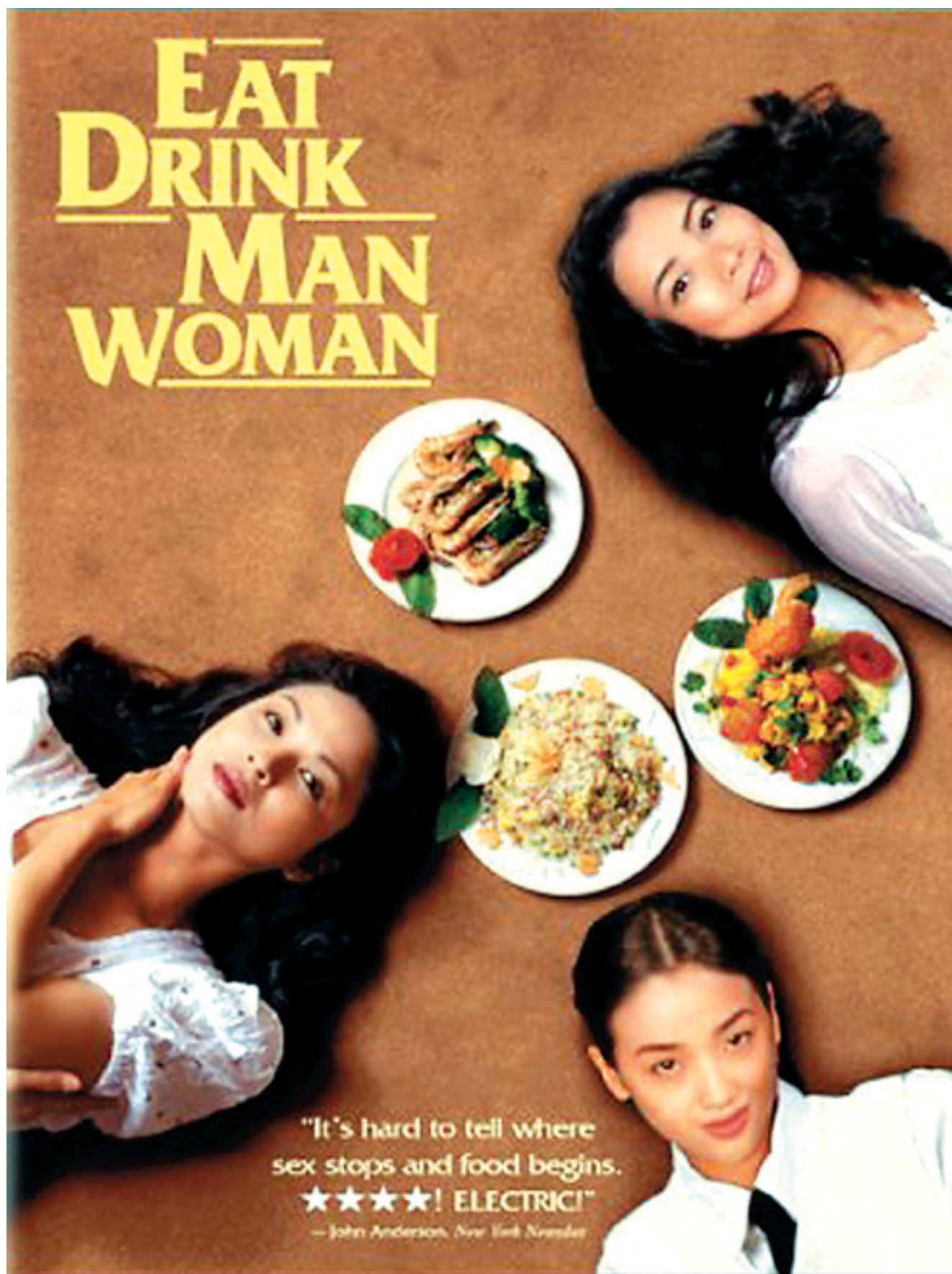
Big Night

Directed by Campbell Scott and Stanley Tucci; Starring Stanley Tucci, Tony Shalhoub, Minnie Driver, Isabella Rossellini and Ian Holm.

This charming movie tells of two Italian brothers who head to the US in the 1950s to seek the good life through opening a restaurant, Paradise. Primo, the elder brother, is a genius chef and unrelenting perfectionist and tends to overshadow his younger brother Secundo, the restaurant's headwaiter and manager.

Despite Primo's great food, Paradise struggles to survive. In a make-or-break bid for success, the brothers arrange to hold an elaborate dinner party for special guest jazz singer Luis Prima.

There are short shots of food in the first two acts of the movie, but things really get cooking at the end, when Primo and Secundo finally serve their starving, drunk guests. The culinary star of



The title *Yinshi Nannu* refers to a quote from Mencius that food and sex are fundamental parts of life.

Photos by Joel Kirkhart



Exquisite Italian food and brotherly love light up *Big Night*.



Babette's Feast stark setting makes the divine French cuisine look more appealing.



Secundo and Primo from *Big Night*

the show is *timpano*, a pasta specialty baked in a thin shell and filled with tomato sauce, penne, meatballs, sausage, eggs and other ingredients – “all the most important things in the world,” Primo says.

The eye-popping feast also includes a starter of consommé, three kinds of risotto of different colors laid out to look like the Italian flag, broiled fish, even an entire roasted suckling pig.

A gentle, fun and ultimately very human movie with some of the most beautiful food ever put to film.



Adding dried mushrooms gives this risotto another layer of flavor.

Recipe:

Yellow bell pepper risotto

This relatively easy recipe (risotto, a creamy rice dish made with special Italian Arborio rice, is never too easy) creates a colorful, delicious dish to make Primo proud.

3 yellow bell peppers, diced
1 tablespoon water
5 tablespoons butter (can replace some with olive oil)
4 cups low-salt chicken broth or vegetable broth
6 shallots, minced
4 garlic cloves, minced
1 cup Arborio rice
1/3 cup dry white wine
1/2 cup Parmesan cheese

Cook the diced pepper with two tablespoons of butter and the tablespoon of water in a skillet over medium heat, partially covered, until very soft, around 20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and transfer to a bowl. (For a more pronounced yellow hue to the dish, puree the bell pepper after cooking and set puree aside to be added

in the last step.)

Pour broth into a small saucepan and heat, keeping at a low simmer.

In a heavy, medium sized saucepan, melt the butter and sautee the shallots and garlic over low-mid heat until soft, about five minutes. Add the rice and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, for around another five minutes until outer layer is translucent.

Splash in the wine and cook, stirring constantly, until wine is fully absorbed by the rice. Add about one-half cup simmer broth, again cooking and stirring the rice until the broth has been absorbed. Continue the process of adding broth and stirring until rice is just cooked through (making it tender with a slight chewy bite), approximately 20 minutes. Remove pan from heat and stir in grated cheese, peppers (or pepper puree) and season with salt and pepper to taste. Makes four servings.

Babette's Feast

Directed by Gabriel Axel, starring Stephane Audran, Birgitte Federspiel and Bodil Kjer. In this quietly beautiful picture that won the 1987 Oscar for Best Foreign Film, a French exile escapes to remote northern Denmark in the 19th century and is taken in by two elderly sisters. She stays with them for years as a maid and cook, preparing the simple meals preferred by the quiet, puritan women. Finally, good fortune comes Babette's way and she decides to create a sumptuous feast for her caretakers and herself.

The food doesn't come into play until the end of the movie, but when Babette gets cooking, the short shots of her gorgeous culinary creations are sure to inspire the appetite.

She imports a treasure trove of authentic French bounty, including several ingredients that dismay her devout mistresses, particularly the flotilla of alcohol and live turtle.

That unfortunate creature becomes the base for real turtle soup, followed by *Belinis Demidoff*, buckwheat cakes topped with cream and caviar, fresh salad and a selection of premium cheeses. The *piece de resistance* is *caille en sarcophage*, quail roasted in a puff pastry shell with a heavenly sauce of *fois grois* and black truffle. The wonderful feast is both an elegant tribute to food's powers to nourish the soul and heart and an ode to the art of cooking.

Eat Drink Man Woman (Yinshi Nannu)

Directed by Ang Lee, starring Sihung Lung, Yang Kuei-Mei, Wu Chien-lien and Wang Yu-Wen. This wise comedy-drama of manners about life, love, Taiwan's generation gap and Lee's favorite theme of the unpredictable results of repressed feelings throws in plenty of delicious-looking food to boot.

Every Sunday, venerable chef Chu prepares an elaborate dinner for his three daughters, who are generally unimpressed by his Herculean efforts and the listless dining ritual mirrors their low appetite for life. Yet change is in the air, and three marriages and a funeral later, the dinner table looks different in ways none of them could expect.

For food fans, the opening scene, which took director Lee a week to shoot, is worth the price of admission (or the several yuan for a pirated DVD) alone. Watching Chu prepare that and other feasts, from roasting his own Peking duck to mincing crab and pork for succulent dumplings, is inspiring and educational. Among the dishes cooked up in the film are jade prawns, steamed deer spare ribs with ginger in a pumpkin pot, lotus flower soup, and chicken wrapped in clay.

In typical Ang Lee fashion, the cinematography is top-notch, not only beautifully capturing the food, but also catching the subtleties in the overall very solid acting. An excellent movie and an inspiring feast for the eyes, stomach and soul.

Movies

Abbasso la Ricchezza! (Down with Riches!)

Directed by Gennaro Righelli, starring Anna Magnani and Vittorio De Sica. Roman fruit vendor Gioconda Perfetti has become rich through wartime smuggling. She leaves her shop and moves to a magnificent villa that once belonged to a count. She also becomes involved with some very dubious characters who profit from her ignorance and cheat her out of her money. Italian with English subtitles.

Where: Italian Embassy, 2 Dongerjie, Sanlitun **When:** 7 pm, May 20, **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187

Comédie de l'innocence (The Comedy of Innocence)

Directed by Raoul Ruiz, starring Isabelle Huppert, Jeanne Balibar, Charles Berling, and Edith Scob. Nine-year-old Camille lives in a comfortable apartment with his mother. He has a camcorder, with which he records snatches of the world around him. One day, he announces that he must go home before his mother gets worried, a declaration that takes his mother by surprise. The two then set out on a quest to find his real mother.

Where: Zhongying Cinema, Xiao Xitian, Xijiekouwai Dajie **When:** May 20, 8 pm, **Admission:** 25 yuan **Tel:** 6226 3455

Cheaper by the Dozen

Directed by Shawn Levy, starring Steve Martin, Bonnie Hunt, Hilary Duff, Piper Perabo, and Tom Welling. An American comedy about a family of 12 children.

Where: UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Kexueyuan Nanlu, Shuangyushu, Haidian, **When:** from today, **Tel:** 8211 2851

The Foliage (Mei Ren Cao)

Directed by Lü Le, starring Shu Qi and Liu Ye. A love story set in 1974 during the Cultural Revolution. Ye Yingyu and Liu Simeng are university students sent to Kunming for re-education. They are immediately attracted to each other; however, Ye has a childhood boyfriend, Yan Dingguo. Ye is confused about which man she loves and realizes her fate is tied to the man she chooses. Chinese with English subtitles.

Where: Cherry Lane Movie Theater, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang, **When:** 8 pm, May 14, **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 135 0125 1303

Music

Stomp's Striking Beats

Stomp Percussion Troupe from the United Kingdom are bringing to Beijing the simple but striking rhythms that have made the show a worldwide hit. Since it was staged on Broadway in 1994, almost 9 million people have seen the show.

Where: Century Theatre, Liangmaqiaolu, Chaoyang **When:** 7:30 pm, May 13-16 **Admission:** 400 - 1,800 yuan **Tel:** 6466 0032

Piano Competition

The third Beijing International Piano Competition features contestants from all over the world competing for awards, including the first prize of US \$20,000.

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall, Zhongshan Park, Xicheng **When:** 7:30 pm, May 6-15 **Tel:** 6406 0189

Yu Quan in Concert

Yu Quan are a duo popular on campuses all over China, with their songs about campus life.

Where: Capital Gymnasium, 54 Baishiqiaolu, Xicheng **When:** 7:30 pm, May 15 **Admission:** 80 - 1,200 yuan **Tel:** 6833 5552

Michele Campanella

Italian pianist Michele Campanella is to give a recital on May 15. During his 35 year career, he has won many awards, including three Grand Prix du Disque in 1976, 1977, 1998, awarded by the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest. The con-

cert is sponsored by China International Culture Exchange Centre and the Cultural Office of the Italian Embassy. Program: *Papillons*, *Blumenstuck* and *Carnival Jest* in Vienna by Schumann, *Spinnerlied* from Wagner's *Der Fliegende Hollander*, *Mephisto Waltz*, *Elsas Brautzug zum Munster* from Wagner's *Lohengrin*, and the waltz from *Gounod's Faust*, by Liszt.

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie **When:** 7:30 pm, May 15 **Admission:** 50-800 yuan **Tel:** 6506 5345 and **Monica Leone**

Monica Leone, also from Italy, and the wife of pianist Michele Campanella, will give a recital in Beijing. Program: Six Sonatas by Scarlatti, Sonata in B Major by Clementi, Sonata, Opus 90 and Sonata Opus 101 by Beethoven.

Where: Peking University Hall **When:** 7 pm, May 16 **Admission:** 10-80 yuan

Performance

Waiting for Godot

Samuel Beckett's landmark drama will be staged in Beijing from May 13. The plot could not be more simple: Two tramps are waiting by a sickly looking tree for the arrival of Mr. Godot...

The production, by Dublin's Gate Theatre, has been described as the quintessential interpretation of Beckett's best known play.

Where: Capital Theatre, 22 Wangfujing Dajie **When:** May 13-15, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 60-280 yuan **Tel:** 6525 0996

Tea House

Lao She's masterpiece Tea House opens on May 19. This production celebrates the drama's history of 45 years since it was first staged, and its 500th performance.

Where: Capital Theater, 22 Wangfujing Dajie **When:** May 19-29, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-280 yuan **Tel:** 6525 0996

Activities

YPHH Happy Hour at Club Football

With the football season approaching its climax, YHPP invites you to Beijing's hottest soccer scene, The Club Football Centre, for the May YPHH Happy Hour. With an electric atmosphere and a unique and memorable collection of football memorabilia to browse (one of David Beckham's boots is housed there) as well as games and activities. As usual, the first through the door receive a free beer.

Where: Red House, 10 Taipingzhuang, Chunxiu Lu **When:** 6:30 pm. May 19, **Tel:** 6417 0495

Chinese Culture Club

Chinese Culture Club will be showing a series of independent documentaries, created by young artists and depicting life and social change in present day China. The cinematographers will be on hand to lead a discussion about each film.

Where: 29, Anjialou, Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** May 21, 28, 7:30 - 9 pm

Admission: 40 yuan, **Tel:** 8462 2081

Beijing Hikers

Fifteen towers of the Great Wall, overnight with dinner, party, drinks, songs, cards and story telling.

Where: Huairou County **When:** May 15 and 16, meet 9 am at the Lido Hotel outside Starbucks, **Cost:** 500 yuan, **Tel:** 13910025516

All Star Baseball Competition

Organized by the Chinese Baseball Association and General Administration of Sport, this competition will invite many famous baseball players to participate in the game. Last year's champion will compete with stars from three other teams. Some lucky audience members will be invited to join the competition.

Where: Fengtai Baseball Diamond, South West Ringroad, Fengtai, **When:** 2:30 - 5:30 pm, May 16, **Tel:** 6389 5651



Exhibitions

Homeland in Memory

He Jiang from Xinjiang and Hu Lihai from Jilin show oil paintings of home as they remember it.

Where: Fafa Gallery, 2 Xiangjiang Beilu, Chaoyang, (Opposite Riviera Garden) **When:** May 9 - 23, 10:30 am - 8 pm daily **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8430 2587

Qin Gallery's Modern Arts

An exhibition of Mao Xiaolang, Wang Yiqiong, Deng Rongbin, Wang Dongchun, Zhang Yanxiang's modern artworks.

Where: Huaweili Enjoy Paradise (North of Beijing Curio City) Chaoyang District **When:** 9:30 am - 7:00 pm, May 7 - 23, **Admission:** free, **Tel:** 8779 0461



Let 100 Flowers Bloom

Continent gallery has collected flower-themed oil paintings by 100 famous Chinese artists. *Shaoyao* by Wei Tianlin, *Shuixian* by Feng Fasi and works by Shao Jingkun are among those recommended by the gallery.

Where: Continent Artist Gallery, Yihe Building, 12 Dongtucheng Lu, Hepingli, **When:** till May 29, **Admission:** free, **Tel:** 6448 9639

Zhong Ruqian Human and Beast Exhibition

"Animals and people have been living on the planet for centuries now, we have all played our roles on the face of earth. We will go on with our role playing."

Zhong Ruqian has created his own artistic conception influenced by traditional Chinese literature and his experience of western art. Various materials and means are used to compose a dazzling space and moment. Happiness and breakdown are major themes of his works.

Where: Creation Art Gallery, north end of Ritan Donglu, Chaoyang, **When:** May 15-23, (Reception at 3 pm - 6 pm, May 15) **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8561 7570

Personal Classifieds

Rentals

Newly refurbished 90 square meter 3 bedroom apartment to sublet as home or office. Seven minutes walk from Sihuidong subway, and a very short drive to either China World Trade Center or Chaoyang Park. 2,500 yuan per month unfurnished or more upon inquiry. SMS13911190037

Located by the Fourth Ring Road, northeast of the University of International Business and Economics, convenient transportation, apartment of 92 square meters with 2 bedrooms, 1 dining room, 1 sitting room, well furnished with wooden floor, air conditioning, 15th floor, 2,500 per month. contact: Ms. Li, lynnl65@hotmail.com; or SMS to 13911776809

Newly furnished 2 bedroom apartment, near Honglingjin Park, with furniture and appliances is ready for rent. The 60 square meter apartment is on the fourth floor of an 18-story building. 2,000 yuan per month (negotiable). Email:116624@sina.com

One bedroom apartment of 60 square meter for rent. 10 minutes from World Trade Center, with home appliances and broadband Internet connection. 3,000 yuan per month. Email: hugojin@163.com

Language Exchange

A student wants to learn French or German. Contact Nancy by email: nancy-gate@tom.com

A visiting scholar from India, currently affiliated to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, would like to learn Chinese during his seven month stay. Shrawan Acharya can teach English and Hindi in lieu of Chinese, and can also pay a nominal amount for Chinese tuition. People with architecture or urban planning background (but others are welcome) are preferred. Contact Shrawan Acharya at 6225 7954 after 7 pm or before 8:30 am or email: shrawanacharya@hotmail.com

A girl, who just graduated from school, now works in Beijing, wants to find a native English speaker. In return, she can teach him Chinese. Her mobile: 13810318214, email: flute@yahoo.com.cn

A girl, working in a foreign enterprise in Beijing, would like to find a friend, whose English is his/her mother tongue. Contact: pfwang@public.fhnet.cn.net

Rizwan Qamar, an English teacher but not a native English speaker, has been teaching English as a foreign language and second language over a period of 10 years, seeks serious minded students to help them in their English learning-No fee-Just Email and write your problem related to language learning. Email: kevinmccaine@yahoo.com

A Chinese Siemens employee, fluent in English, Mandarin, and German is seeking person who speaks German as mother tongue, and is willing to have more conversation with Chinese native speaker. Tel: 6434 6641 (o); mobile: 13520341372

An honest and nice girl, with fluent English, wants to make friends with native English speaker. In return, she can teach Chinese. Email to fitting79@sina.com.cn or call her: 8683 0415

A Beijing girl, 25, post-graduate, has traveled as a backpacker in Europe and China and now is looking for a language exchanger in French. Contact her by email: laughalittle@sina.com

Amy and Amanda, two Chinese girls who are fond of English, are looking for native English speakers as language exchange. Tel: 6434 4054

Situations Vacant and Wanted

Hao Xiaodi, male, 44 years old, graduated from TU Delft, the Netherlands with a PhD degree and now works in a local university as a professor. Supplying educational consultancy for Chinese studying in the Netherlands and serving foreign companies and organizations in consultancy and translation of environmental protection in China. Tel: 6831 5906; Email: xdhao@hotmail.com

Jenny, a Beijing girl just returned from overseas, is looking for chance to work with individual friends or

company partner on full-time or part-time base. With seven years experience in Mandarin and English bilingual teaching. Contact her at: 8617 6369, 6226 4913 or Email: 63982979@sina.com

Looking for good receptionist working in a highly professional hair salon of a 5-star country club, Chinese native, mature, speaks fluent English, good marketing and communication skills, experience in hair salon preferable. Interested personnel please email your English or Chinese CV in plain text to hkcheng8@126.com

Personals

British MBA, planning to create a bilingual (Chinese and English) journal "Service Excellence" distributed in the world and to open an international education center in Beijing. Urgently looking for cooperative partners (national and international), especially investors. Contact: Ms. Huang at huangyan1963@yahoo.com.cn or 13520237227

Lawyer Gao Mingguang, received his LL.M. from Renmin University, has been a full-time lawyer since 1994 with expertise in litigation and arbitration, international investment and international trade. Now he is willing to provide legal consulting service free of charge in the aforesaid aspects and hoping to make friends at home and abroad. Email to g-mguang@263.net

A 27-year-old boy, a new immigrant to Canada and plans to stay at Vancouver, is seeking a person who wants to leave Beijing with him in October. Contact him by MSN: lukekezhong@hotmail.com

Traditional Chinese geographic map study and culture teaching. Contact Wang Hongqi by email: contact:kkdr@sina.com

For Sale and Wanted

Motorbike license A category, which allows motorcycle to drive in downtown, is ready for transfer, 9,000 yuan, no negotiation. Mobile:13011297406

Brand new backpack for sale. Wolf Skin 70L+10L, bought from outdoor shop near Gongti, with original price 580 yuan. Now 400 yuan for sale. SMS to 13011206928

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TV and Radio Highlights

CCTV-9

Monday - Friday

| | |
|--------------|---------|
| Around China | 6:30 am |
| Documentary | 8:30 am |

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|----------------------|----------|
| Nature and Science | |
| Chinese Civilization | 11:30 am |
| Cultural Express | 4:00 pm |

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| Shanghai Today and | |
| Learning Chinese | 6 pm |
| Center Stage | 7:30 pm |

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| Sports Scene and Learning | |
| Chinese | 11 pm |
| Dialogue | 12:30 pm |

Saturday

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| Travelogue | 9:30 am |
| World Insight | 11:30 am |

Sunday

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| China This Week | 9:30 am |
| Business Guide | 11:00 am |
| China Today | 11:30 am |

China Radio International 91.5 FM

Monday - Friday

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|-------------------|--------------|
| Easy FM Afternoon | 2-7 pm |
| Fun in Beijing | 5:05-5:30 pm |
| Joy FM | 9:05-11 pm |

Saturday

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|----------------------|------------|
| Music Memories | 8:05-11 am |
| Euro Hit 40 | 12:05-1 pm |
| Music Sans Frontiers | 6:05-8 pm |

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|--------|------------|
| Joy FM | 9:05-11 pm |
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Sunday

| | |
|----------------|------------|
| Music Memories | 8:05-11 am |
| Jazz Beat | 6:05-8 pm |
| Joy FM | 9:05-11 pm |

Guangdong Gardens



Qinghui Garden

By Jane Ram

It could have been a complete washout, but the event rain made my visit to Shunde's Qinghui Garden a magical experience. The fine morning mist thickened into steady drizzle as we approached the main entrance. The taxi driver kindly suggested I sit for a while in the restaurant at the edge of the garden until the weather improved. But the rain looked as though it could last for weeks and I had only a couple of hours, so I ignored his well-intentioned advice and headed for the ticket office. It seemed that other visitors were discouraged by the weather, so I had the place to myself.

When Qing dynasty scholar Long Yingshi started to plan his garden almost 200 years ago, he evidently had in mind someone like myself, determined to enjoy the place regardless of the weather. As the rain battered the bamboo, I strolled around the winding paths, completely protected by the generous tiled canopies with their picturesque upturned eaves. I carried an umbrella, but was so well sheltered from the rain that I scarcely needed to open it throughout my visit.

It did not require much imagination to conjure up images of the numerous members of the original household as they went about their daily life in and around this wonderful garden. It was too wet to challenge my unseen host to a game of chess at one of the waiting tables.

But I felt like a privileged guest as I clambered up the mock mountains to survey the garden from above. Surely I must be inspired to honor the occasion with a quick burst of poetry, to be written quickly and fluently in my best calligraphy for circulation among my fellow guests. Nothing appropriate came into my head at that moment, but this was the only disappointment of the visit.

Qinghui Garden measures some 22,000 square meters, according to a leaflet I collected on entry. But the arrangement of paths, pavilions, bridges, screens, trees, water and other features create a sense of infinite space.

I started out by walking around the perimeter of the garden to orientate myself. Then came the fun part as I embarked on the real journey of exploration. Surprises came one after the other as I pursued the series of curving, zig-zagging and interlocking paths which guide the visitor in the subtlest way to discover yet one more carefully planned vista, yet another optical illusion of infinite space. Somewhere I have read that the ideal Chinese garden should appeal to the human eye in two very different ways, according to whether the person is walking and so coming on new discoveries at every step, or stationary and taking in 360 degrees of detail at leisure from a fixed viewpoint. This garden certainly meets both criteria.

The plants are only part of the mix in a traditional Chinese garden. But like everything else in this small world, every plant should look as near perfect as possible and be displayed to its best advantage. Strands of weeping willow must fall at exactly the right angle to frame the view from a stone bridge. A few slender bamboos are planted in front of a fan-shaped wall opening, in such a way that they add extra depth to the distant vista.

Southern China's climate allows tropical and many sub-tropical species to flourish in spectacular fashion all year round. I can imagine a gathering of friends summoned to enjoy the first new leaves of the weeping willows and bamboo in late winter. In spring they would savor the perfume of cymbidiums and osmanthus, while admiring the almost unreal beauty of camellias and the riotous bursts of color from azaleas. By mid-year they would be writing couplets to celebrate the droplets of rain sparkling on the velvet leaves of the lotus. In late July, the lotus would be blooming and in October, everyone would celebrate the glorious perfection of the many different types of chrysanthemum, doubtless including some of the carefully manicured "10,000 flowers on one stem."

The garden is a veritable treasury of all kinds of traditional craftsmanship – fine pottery, exquisite wood carvings (including screens with panels of colored and etched glass, sculpted stone and plaster molding). There are even a few humorous touches,

Guangdong is so well known for its bullish economy that many forget it also has much to offer as a tourist destination – not least its many magnificent gardens, old and new.



Yuyin Garden

like the ceramic drainpipes complete with ceramic birds nests and birds.

While the eyes and the nose are fully engaged in this garden, the ears are by no means forgotten. Sizeable cascades and tiny trickling springs make their own music, backed up by the rustling leaves and creaking trunks of bamboo as the trees sway in the slightest breeze.

As I was thinking about leaving, the rain began to ease off and the first tour group arrived, shepherded by the inevitable guide with a squeaky megaphone. One member of the group decided to make his own way around the garden. We got into conversation and struck up an immediate rapport when we discovered that we both enjoy Guangzhou's Orchid Garden and also the Chen Family Temple, which I planned to revisit soon. My new friend said he had visited the gardens of Suzhou and other towns "south of the Yangtze River" but preferred the more intimate and varied style of the "Lingnan" (south of the ridges) region around Guangzhou.

The Qinghui Garden is one of the four gardens designated as "famous" examples of the Lingnan style. The others are Liang's Garden in Foshan, Ke Yuan in Dongguan and Yuyin Garden in Pan Yu. All date from approximately the same period – mid-19th century and they share many common features, although each has its own character and some, like the Ke Yuan (cradle of the Lingnan School of painting) played a significant role in many facets of cultural life.

Enjoyable and thought provoking though they are, the Lingnan gardens represent only one facet of Guangdong's flourishing garden culture. Guangzhou itself has many fine parks and gardens. One of the city's least known gardens is its oldest – the Garden of the Nan Yue King. This dates



Chen Family Temple



A window in Qinghui Garden

Photos by Jane Ram

Travel Tips

At most times of the year it is easy to negotiate with Guangzhou taxi drivers for a full-day or half-day rate for your excursions. Allow a full day for Foshan to be able to see the magnificent Ancestral Temple and other attractions, as well as looking at Shiwan pottery.

Shamian Island has long been the most popular place to stay for visitors to Guangzhou. This unique outdoor museum of late 19th-century architecture offers a wide range of accommodation options. With its impeccable service, exquisite food and beautiful rooms, the White Swan is the most luxurious. The Victory Hotel Annexe (built in 1880) is considerably cheaper with clean, newly-painted single rooms priced from 300 yuan, while the nearby Youth Hostel is a perennial favorite for backpackers.

There are numerous daily flights between Beijing and Guangzhou, nominally priced at 3,400 yuan (return), but discount fares as low as 2,040 yuan are frequently available.

back over 2,000 years, to the Qin dynasty, at which time Guangzhou was already a flourishing trading port. Currently closed for full archaeological excavation, it is China's earliest surviving garden and, indeed, one of the earliest gardens anywhere in the world. Already archaeologists have found evidence of pavilions and paved walks, decorative lotus pools and elaborately engineered waterways winding through its huge area. When it reopens, it will surely be a major stop for every garden lover.

Guangzhou's Chen Family Temple is weak on plant life, although when it was completed in 1900 it was doubtless adorned with many seasonal potted plants. But the rich and varied range of botanical themes in the wood, stone and plaster, pottery and painted ornamentation more than justifies a visit.

The Orchid Garden, next to the original Trade Fair building, is perhaps my favorite Guangzhou garden. It has the mellow appeal of a long established garden and it contains a number of rare botanical species. It is very well maintained and is never crowded. It is small enough to explore fully within an hour or so, then it's time to relax and enjoy the ambiance with a pot of Orchid Tea (included in the ticket price).

The South China Botanical Garden in the outskirts of Guangzhou is currently undergoing a 300 million yuan upgrade, with the aim of attracting some 2 million visitors a year. Change is already evident in the flashy displays of orchids. It is so big that I always ride on one of the electric trains that run around the garden. If I see something that appeals to me, I dismount and board another train when I am ready to move on again.

Some of Guangzhou's best gardens are quite new, like the three-storey rock garden complete with waterfall, fishpond and pavilion in the atrium of the White Swan Hotel. It caused considerable excitement when the hotel opened in 1982. Like the entire hotel it has been very well maintained through the years.

Perhaps the biggest surprise in the Dongguan area was Green World. I visited this theme park rather against my better judgment, but by some happy chance blundered in the direction of the Green Tunnel, a 200-meter arched pergola totally covered by two spectacular creepers, grown in alternating 20-metre sections. Of all weeks in the year, this was exactly the right time to see wisteria and the rare mucuna birdwoodiana, the flowers of which resemble flocks of doves in flight.